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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken for the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation to develop evaluative criteria and procedures for the accreditation of nontraditional education. The summary report presents the major activities and findings of the study. The Introduction gives its history and background and outlines its scope, including the goals, organizational structure, and implementation. In Chapter 1, nontraditional education is defined, with its essential components and elements as well as its strengths and weaknesses identified. Chapter 2 presents findings on the current status of accreditation of nontraditional education, proposes changes in the process, and touches on a number of related issues such as experiential and prior learning, off-campus degrees and programs, contractual relationships, continuing education, the meaning of degrees, relationships to state and federal agencies, and the costs of accreditation. The implications of the project's findings are presented in Chapter 3, directly addressing the roles and relationships of traditional postsecondary education, the nontraditionalist, and accreditation. Twenty-five recommendations addressed to specific audiences are made in Chapter 4. Significant findings of a national survey undertaken for the project are reported throughout. Appended are a sequential evaluation model for institutions with off-campus programs, a list of advisory committee members, a roster of participating institutions, and a report of the PECA Seminar on the COPA Project. (Author/MSE)

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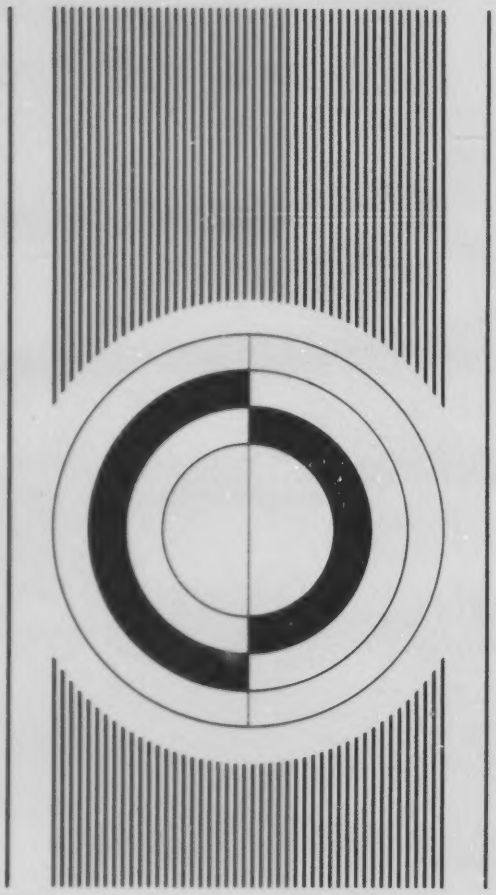

# ASSESSING NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATION

SUMMARY REPORT of the Project to Develop Evaluative Criteria and Procedures for the Accreditation of Nontraditional Education
Volume 1 • September 1978

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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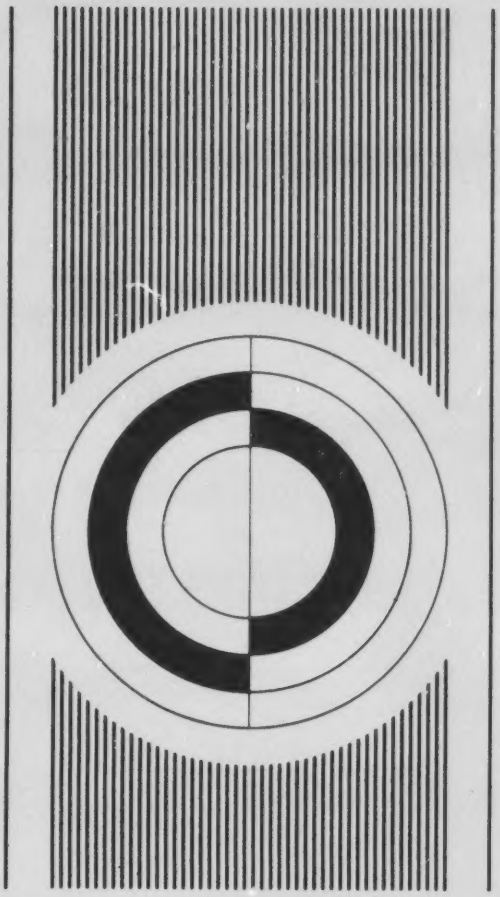

# ASSESSING NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATION

• By Grover J. Andrews

SUMMARY REPORT of the Project
to Develop Evaluative Criteria and
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of Nontraditional Education
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THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATION
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## PREFACE

Nontraditional education has come to mean many different things to many different people: To the adult whose formal education, for one reason or another, was interrupted or never began, it means access through new delivery systems. To the individual constrained from further education by personal and professional responsibilities, it means new opportunities for learning. To institutions faced with a declining student market, it means a new clientele to be served. To faculties it may mean either opportunities for new ventures in teaching and learning or an erosion of the academic estate. To accrediting associations it means finding new ways to assess and assure educational quality. To the evaluator it means learning to assess educational achievements as well as processes. To students it means a shift of emphasis in the educational process to accomplishments and outcomes for more effective learning. To a changing society it means responsiveness to its educational needs. To American postsecondary education in general, nontraditional education means the beginning of needed and constructive change.

In the design and implementation of the project to develop evaluative criteria and procedures for the accreditation of nontraditional education for the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), we have encountered and addressed these many and complex perceptions of nontraditional education. At first we anticipated that during the project a new term might emerge

to replace "nontraditional;" it has not and probably should not. The diversity and scope of educational activities offered as nontraditional can best be identified by this general term. The nature and character of the activities are so diffuse that any new label and attempt at definition would at best be only cosmetic. The term nontraditional has been a part of American postsecondary education for a decade now, and as ambiguous as it may be, most individuals have at least a conceptual image that a departure from the conventional is taking place when the term is applied. We have learned in this study that what may be considered nontraditional for one institution may not be so perceived by another. However, a single theme of greater access to more effective learning opportunities has emerged for most nontraditional education. Generally we have found that nontraditional education refers to the innovative or unconventional design and/or delivery of educational programs for a new clientele, programs that emphasize educational accomplishments and outcomes and recognize an individual's prior learning experiences when relevant to current educational goals.

In the project we have elected to view American postsecondary education holistically. Within the larger system are many subsystems composed of various types of institutions that award specific types and levels of educational credentials. It has become obvious to us through the research activities of the project that nontraditional education is a variation found in all types and levels of institutions. According to sociologist Charles P. Loomis, for any large and complex system to function effectively and efficiently there are certain master processes that need

to be in place and operating. These are boundary maintenance (who is responsible for what), systemic linkage (appropriate overlapping responsibilities), and communications (effective two-way flow of information). The problems of nontraditional education are the problems of American postsecondary education and are usually related to a dysfunction within one or more of the system's master processes. The problems we have identified in nontraditional education are presented in the summary report and the various research reports; however, it should be stated here that in general we have found the nontraditional education movement to be a needed and constructive change within postsecondary education. The concept of nontraditional education is generally accepted by educators and the public, and in practice, most of the programs have provided expanded access to postsecondary education of quality for a new clientele, especially adults.

We have also found that, in the main, accrediting associations have been effective and fair in their evaluations of nontraditional education. Access to the recognized and established accrediting associations is available to nontraditional education, and for the most part membership has been achieved within a reasonable time.

Throughout the reports of the project we have used the terms educational or learning outcomes, educational accomplishments, and performance criteria interchangeably. By these terms we are referring to the procedures and measures that have been or should be developed to assess individual learning that has taken place. In using these terms we are not merely referring to the use of existing psychometric tests and/or procedures used by institutions to follow up on their graduates.

This summary report for the project presents the major activities and findings of the study. The Introduction gives the history and background of the project and outlines its scope, including the goals, organizational structure, and implementation activities. In chapter 1 we discuss what is nontraditional education, identifying its essential components and elements, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, and problems. In chapter 2 we present findings concerning the current status of accreditation of nontraditional education. In this section we review the concept of accreditation, its role and functions, and how it has dealt with the evaluation of nontraditional education. We propose changes that should be made in the evaluation process. Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of a number of related issues such as experiential and prior learning, off-campus degrees and programs, contractual relationships, continuing education and lifelong learning, the meaning of degrees, relationships to state and federal agencies, and the costs for accreditation.

The implications of the findings of the project are presented in chapter 3 and directly address the roles and relationships of traditional postsecondary education, the nontraditionalist, and accreditation. The significance of the findings and the collective impact of all activities of the project from the research and review of the accreditation of nontraditional education have led to a series of recommendations that are presented in chapter 4 of the report. The twenty-five recommendations are addressed to specific audiences to facilitate further action in achieving constructive change in American postsecondary education.

Throughout the summary report we have included significant findings from the national survey that was conducted during the project. We are especially grateful to the more than fifteen hundred individuals who took the time to respond to the questionnaire.

Briefly, we have found that nontraditional education (1) is basically a variation within, not a departure from the traditional purposes, processes, and outcomes of American postsecondary education; (2) focuses on equality of access, quality of results, and individual achievements; (3) is a positive and creative force in postsecondary education; (4) is a stimulus for constructive change in postsecondary education; and (5) is achieving acceptance among the constituent groups of postsecondary education as seen by the adoption and integration of nontraditional characteristics by a significant number of traditional institutions.

The traditionalist and nontraditionalist should close ranks and work together as partners in identifying common problems and developing effective means of serving all who need and seek postsecondary education. We have found and believe that there should be a single process and set of procedures applied in the evaluation of postsecondary education for accreditation purposes. There should not be separate standards or criteria applied in the evaluation of traditional and nontraditional educational institutions. Accreditation criteria or standards for all institutions should be such as to establish a clear relationship of institutional purposes to educational achievements with adequate resources and processes to insure quality.

Specifically the goals and objectives for the project have been thoroughly addressed in the following ways:

1. To identify the essential elements that should be present in the various types of nontraditional study programs that lead to a degree--e.g., associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctorate.

The general characteristics and components of an institution and the essential elements of a postsecondary educational program have been identified and are included in chapter 1 of this summary report and are more fully presented and discussed in the various research reports of the project.

2. To develop a classification of the types of nontraditional educational programs.

A taxonomy for the classification and identification of the nontraditional nature of postsecondary institutions and programs has been developed and is briefly discussed in chapter 1 of the summary report. Volume 4 of the reports of the project includes a full presentation of the taxonomy; the essential elements, components, and criteria for evaluation; and profiles of the sixty-two institutions in the study.

3. To develop appropriate criteria and evaluation procedures for nontraditional educational programs and institutions for use by accrediting commissions.

As mention above, the taxonomy includes the essential elements and criteria that should be used in the development, implementation, and evaluation of postsecondary education, whether traditional or nontraditional. We have also reviewed the current models for evaluation of all postsecondary education institutions and have proposed changes that should be made. These are discussed in chapter 2 of the summary

report. A sequential evaluation model developed by Dr. Patricia Thrash for use with multiple-site locations is presented in detail in Appendix A.

4. To propose a new national policy to be adopted by COPA to facilitate uniform approaches to the development and evaluation of nontraditional educational programs and institutions of an acceptable quality.

A new statement on nontraditional education has been prepared and is included in Chapter 4, Recommendations.

We feel that each objective of the project has been achieved to an acceptable degree. An outside evaluation of the project was authorized by the president of COPA and was conducted by Dr. Jerry Miller of the American Council on Education. His report is on file in the COPA office in Washington, D. C.

The project reports are presented in four volumes. Volume 1 is the Summary Report of the Project and includes the general recommendations. Volume 2 includes six research reports as follows:

Report No. 1 Nontraditional Certificate Programs (John Harris Philip McCullough)

Report No. 2 Salient Points from "A Study of the Acceptability and Negotiability of External Degrees" (John Harris)

Report No. 3 Institutional Accreditation and Nontraditional Undergraduate Educational Institutions and Programs (John Harris)

Report No. 5 Critical Characteristics of an Accreditable Institution, Basic Purposes of Accreditation, and Nontraditional Forms of Most Concern (John Harris)

Report No. 6 A Review of Nontraditional Graduate Degrees (with particular emphasis on the problems of accreditation) (Paul Dressel)

Report No. 8 Analysis of the National Survey on Accreditation and Nontraditional Education (John Harris and Grover Andrews)

Volume 3, Report No. 4, "Problems and Principles in the Recognition of Accreditation," is a special report prepared by Paul Dressel, with assistance from Dr. Lewis B. Mayhew, Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin, Dr. Wimberly C. Royster, Dr. Rudolph W. Schulze, and Dr. Herbert Weisinger. Volume 4, Report No. 7, "A Taxonomy for Classification and Determination of the Nontraditional Nature of Postsecondary Education Institutions: Essential Components, Elements, and Criteria for Evaluation," prepared by Philip McCullough and Grover Andrews, is the taxonomy for analysis, classification, and evaluation of postsecondary education (traditional and nontraditional) and includes the essential elements and components for postsecondary education, and the criteria for evaluation. Volume 4 also includes an analysis by Kay Andersen of the regional accrediting commissions' policies, procedures, and standards and the FRACHE policies. Also included are the institutional profiles, based on the taxonomy, of the sixty-two institutions that have participated in the project. Quotes included in the summary report are taken from draft copies of the various research reports.

We wish to acknowledge with appreciation the many individuals who have made major contributions of time, effort, and resources for the successful implementation of this project. We are grateful for the cooperation of the presidents and staff of the sixty-two institutions, who participated in the project by supplying complete information and documents on their institutions and programs as a data base for the study, and to members of the Advisory Committee and the Presidents' Review Panel for their guidance and direction throughout the project.

As director of the project, I wish to add a personal word of appreciation to the project staff--Kay Andersen, Paul Dressel, John Harris,

Jimmie Harmon, Mary Jo Rager, and Patricia Thrash--for their patience, endurance, commitment, and hard work for the past eighteen months. It is truly the finest and most capable group with whom I have ever worked. Special thanks go to Philip McCullough from the University of Tennessee, a doctoral intern with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association, and to Arthur Schlueter of the Commission staff for their valuable assistance in the research activities of the project; and to Marian Lord who has carefully and effectively edited all of the reports. To Kenneth E. Young, president of COPA, I am most grateful for the complete freedom and full support he has given to me and the staff in the implementation of the project.

Finally, I am grateful to Dr. Arlon Elser and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for their confidence expressed through a $95,000 grant which made the project possible.

Grover J. Andrews
Project Director

# INTRODUCTION

## History of the Project

In April 1975 the board of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), meeting in Washington, D. C., engaged in a lengthy discussion of the problems arising from the creation of a variety of unconventional forms and delivery modes of postsecondary education known as "nontraditional education." By nontraditional education the COPA board meant such things as external degrees, independent study programs, competency-based instruction, learning contracts, military base education, experiential education, prior learning, off-campus operations, and contracting arrangements among institutions, agencies, or organizations for the delivery of education.

The problems identified by the board appeared to fall into two interrelated categories: problems of quality assurance for nontraditional education and problems related to accreditation of nontraditional education, especially by the regional accrediting commissions for postsecondary education. Both categories of problems appeared to have segments related to policy issues and operational procedures.

An overriding concern of the COPA board was that the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation--the new national organization for all officially recognized voluntary, nongovernmental accrediting bodies--properly address and accommodate the rapidly developing nontraditional education

movement through its constituent members. Procedures of the various regional accrediting commissions for evaluating nontraditional education stemmed from three policy statements of the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (FRACHE), which was a forerunner of COPA. Produced in 1973, these policies were the "Interim Statement on Accreditation of Nontraditional Study," "Interim Guidelines on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations," and "Postsecondary Educational Programs Conducted by Accredited or Candidate Institutions on Military Bases."

The COPA board concluded its discussion by authorizing a national project to study the accreditation of nontraditional postsecondary education. Dr. Kenneth E. Young, president of COPA then appointed an ad hoc Committee on Nontraditional Study to assess the nontraditional education movement and to recommend a plan for the development and implementation of a national project on the accreditation of nontraditional education.

The ad hoc committee was composed of Dr. Kay J. Andersen, Western Association of Schools and Colleges; Dr. Grover J. Andrews, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; Mr. William A. Fowler, National Home Study Council; Mr. Dana R. Hart, Association of Independent Colleges and Schools; Dr. Patricia A. Thrash, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; and Mr. Eugene Van Antwerp, Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. The first meeting of the committee took place in Hyannis Port in August 1975 in conjunction with the COPA Summer Conference. At the first meeting four specific tasks in the assessment of the nontraditional education movement were developed: (1) determine if there was a need to revise the FRACHE policies, (2) survey the current policies, procedures,

and practices of the various accrediting commissions, (3) identify problems arising in the accreditation of nontraditional education, and (4) make recommendations to COPA on the development and implementation of the proposed national project.

Prior to the second meeting of the committee, which was held in Atlanta in September 1975, the committee members collected the various documents containing the policy statements, standards, and procedures that were currently in use by the various accrediting commissions, and each member identified and listed the problems that the accrediting bodies were experiencing in the accreditation of nontraditional education. This information was analyzed, and a report was prepared for COPA that included a set of basic assumptions and identified specific problems concerning the accreditation of nontraditional education. The report also made recommendations concerning the development and implementation of a national project on the accreditation of nontraditional education to be conducted by COPA.

A brief summary of the report of the ad hoc committee follows:

> Institutional agencies rely on basic, and sometimes written assumptions concerning nontraditional study:
>
> 1. Reasonable and sound innovation, consistent with institutional goals, should be encouraged.
>
> 2. Innovations should be considered in the context of the changing nature of postsecondary education (recognizing the explosion in the kinds of educational delivery systems used, the changing nature and structure of degree work, and the multiplying forms of learning).
>
> 3. The qualitative assessment of nontraditional study must assure acceptance by the educational community, attest to the integrity of the institution or program, and assure the public of the quality of such study.

4. The purpose (i.e., goals and objectives) of the nontraditional effort must be representative of postsecondary education in general.

5. The process as well as the outcomes must be measured to attest to the institution's or program's product as an acceptable representative of postsecondary education.

6. Recognizing that quality assurance and other responsibilities have been assigned to accrediting agencies by outside agencies (especially governmental) and the general public, accreditors must determine those areas which are appropriately their responsibility.

7. The development of methods and procedures should proceed from the generic to the specific.

8. Recognizing that accreditation of nontraditional study is generally more expensive, the process should not be allowed to become too burdensome and must remain reasonable in costs.

9. The policies and procedures of evaluation must be applicable to the broad spectrum of postsecondary education and should apply equally to traditional and nontraditional institutions and programs.

These basic underlying assumptions raise two sets of questions that should be addressed in the COPA project. They are:

1. Is accreditation a change agent? Is the major purpose of accreditation to "foster excellence" and improve institutions? Or, is accreditation best equipped to attest to institutional/program quality, certifying that, at a given point in time, the institution or program meets minimum standards?

2. Has the time come for a reconsideration of the policy of blanket accreditation? Should the regionals assume more responsibility for all educational programs within their territory, regardless of the status of the parent institution? Should accreditation be granted to a satellite or branch center only when that unit has state authority to operate? The "operationally separate" and "separately accreditable" concepts should be clarified.

The review of the current experience with nontraditional education by the various accrediting commissions that are constituent members of COPA reveals a number of operational practices and characteristics of note:

1. Adaptation of regular policies and procedures;

2. Enactment of additional policies and procedures;

3. Allotment of extra staff and commission time;

4. The necessity of visits to satellites and branch centers;

5. Stimulates change within traditional institutions and/or programs;

6. Additional requirements in the identification, selection, and training of evaluators;

7. Use of more flexible self-study options;

8. More extensive use of legal counsel;

9. More attention to the central administration and more contact with other agencies, such as the Veterans' Administration and state agencies;

10. Precise reporting;

11. Better communication with member institutions;

12. More use of agency publications;

13. More interregional cooperation in fielding teams;

14. More sharing of knowledge with other agencies and associations.

The major problems in the area of nontraditional education identified by the various accrediting commissions in 1975 included the following:

1. Difficulty in obtaining hard data (or even reliable judgments) on institutional policies and procedures concerning such areas as quality control of faculty (clear procedures for faculty performance) and faculty evaluation of student work (typically vague and descriptive, rather than analytical and critical in terms of real educational worth and rigor);

2. An attitude on the part of many individual faculty and staff members in nontraditional institutions that any kind of structure is basically inimical to genuine, worthwhile innovation in contemporary higher education;

3. A desire for "power without responsibility" (accompanied by an advocacy of complete academic and personal freedom for everyone) on the part of many faculty members (and their student followers) in nontraditional institutions, including a "holier-than-thou," "we-don't-need-you" attitude toward external evaluators;

4. Overwritten publications that, nevertheless, frequently lacked clarity and specificity with respect to degree and other program requirements;

5. Inadequate academic student advisement in an unstructured situation.

6. Lack of adequate methods of quality control;

7. Inadequacy of design and evaluation of a new delivery system;

8. Distortion and misrepresentation by a nontraditional institution and misunderstanding by others of its purpose and scope;

9. Resistance to legitimate nontraditional institutions by the established institutions;

10. Inadequate protection of the consumer and the dissemination of inaccurate information, especially to foreign students;

11. Inadequate training of evaluators and consultants to work with nontraditional institutions;

12. Inadequate procedures for dealing with the phenomenon of "instant accreditation," that is, when an accredited institution makes an unauthorized extension of its accreditation to cover another institution or operation.

The ad hoc committee concluded its report with two recommendations:

1. A task force should be established and made operational as soon as possible to frame a national policy for the accreditation of nontraditional efforts in postsecondary education. (Charges to the task force included identification of the universe

of nontraditional education and the development and publication of guidelines for the evaluation of nontraditional education.)

2. In the interim, the FRACHE policies contained in the "Interim Statement on Accreditation and Nontraditional Study," "Interim Guidelines on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations," and "Postsecondary Educational Programs Conducted by Accredited or Candidate Institutions on Military Bases" should be adopted by COPA and kept in force. In addition, the regional accrediting commissions should supplement these policies with a requirement that if an institution extends its educational activity beyond the boundaries of its accrediting region, the institution must notify its accrediting agency and that of the region into which it is moving. The institution involved should obtain legal authorization to operate in the new state(s).

After the report of the ad hoc committee was issued, the COPA staff considered several alternatives for implementing the project on nontraditional education. In February 1976 at the COPA Invitational Conference held in Atlanta, the COPA president reconvened the ad hoc committee to review the various alternatives under consideration. The committee recommended that a national research project from an accreditation perspective be undertaken to develop evaluative criteria for nontraditional education and that a proposal be written to seek outside funding to provide basic support. It was recommended that the project be jointly sponsored with COPA by the six regional accrediting associations, which would provide staff support from among their various commissions. Professional research assistance would be contracted for if COPA were successful in securing outside funding for the project.

The president of COPA and the executive secretaries of the regional commissions involved agreed on the following personnel for the project: Dr. Grover J. Andrews, associate executive secretary, Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, director; Dr. Patricia A. Thrash,

associate director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and Dr. Kay J. Andersen, executive director, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, staff associates; and Dr. Paul Dressel of Michigan State University and Dr. John Harris of Middle Tennessee State University, principal researchers. It was further agreed that the proposed project was of such significance to accreditation and postsecondary education that if outside funds did not become available, the project would be jointly supported by COPA and the regional accrediting commissions.

During the spring of 1976, explorations were made with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, which responded with genuine interest. On 1 June 1976, a request for $86,000 was submitted to Kellogg for basic support for a national project "To Develop Evaluative Criteria for the Accreditation of Nontraditional Education." The foundation executives and board, after appropriate deliberations and consideration, acted formally on the request and on 3 March 1977 notified COPA that the project had been funded. On 23 August 1977, in response to a request for additional funds to add a review panel of presidents to the advisory component of the project, Kellogg increased the grant by $9,000 bringing the total amount received from the foundation to $95,000. The project officially began on 1 April 1977 and continued for an eighteen-month period until 30 September 1978.

## Rationale for the Project

Apart from the action of the COPA board to initiate and authorize the project on nontraditional education, there existed a logical and compelling rationale for a study of the accreditation of nontraditional forms of postsecondary education: Voluntary accrediting associations in exercising major responsibility for assuring that educational institutions and programs meet certain standards must adequately accommodate the nontraditional education movement to provide an assurance of quality of the new programs for the new students.

Many individuals, institutions, and other organizations and agencies have tried and continue to attempt to "assign" to accreditation the issue of boundary maintenance. Historically, however, the accrediting commissions have not deemed the geographical location issue per se to be within the scope of their jurisdiction. It is only when the quality of education offered is in question that the accrediting commissions may have a role to play and may take action that would affect the geographical movements of an institution in establishing and maintaining off-campus centers and satellite operations. State agencies and institutional governing boards have a more direct role in the control and regulation of such operations by postsecondary institutions. The boundary issue alone did not provide an appropriate rationale for the COPA Project on Nontraditional Education.

An appropriate framework was found instead in a review of the variety of nontraditional educational programs being offered by postsecondary institutions and their methods for preserving academic standards and a review and assessment of the ways the various accrediting commissions have worked with

the unconventional programs and institutions to assure a preservation of academic standards. The framework and rationale needed to be broad enough to include the quality assurance issues concerning purpose, governance, organizational structure, students, curriculum content, delivery systems, and academic credits and credentials within the context of the reasonable and appropriate expectations of regional accreditation.

Since the reports of the Carnegie Commission Study on Higher Education began to appear in the late 1960s, followed closely by the reports of the Commission or Nontraditional Study completed in 1974, the demand placed upon institutions of postsecondary education to develop new delivery systems and innovative learning forms has been enormous. Many institutions responded with the creation of new programs for new clienteles far too rapidly to allow for adequate planning and training of faculty in the delivery of nontraditional education. Dr. Samuel B. Gould, chairman of the Commission on Nontraditional Study, estimates that eight hundred institutions have developed and implemented nontraditional educational programs since 1973. With such a rapid expansion of these programs, the quality of many in existence today is being questioned, and the ultimate outcome could be a serious deterioration of the value of an academic degree or other credential damaging all students.

As a result of the dramatic growth of nontraditional education, the accrediting commissions are faced with new, unusual, and sometimes difficult problems in assessing the quality of the unconventional programs. A number of the commissions have adapted existing evaluative processes to accommodate the nontraditional, and, some have developed new procedures. All have worked from the FRACHE "Interim Statement on Accreditation and Nontraditional Study," which was helpful as a starting point but not completely adequate.

In order for the accrediting commissions to continue to serve the public by fostering and attesting to academic excellence in their member institutions, new processes and procedures for the accurate and equitable evaluation of nontraditional education must be developed.

## Scope of the Project

The COPA Project was designed to be comprehensive in nature and to include a representative number of postsecondary institutions that offer nontraditional study leading to some type of formal credential or certification. Nontraditional study, for the purpose of the project, included external degrees, campus-free institutions, competency-based instructional programs, modular curriculum design, multimedia instructional degree programs, learning contracts for degrees, off-campus programs, military base education, independent study programs, credit for prior learning, experiential learning, and contracting arrangements among institutions, agencies, or organizations for the delivery of education. All degree levels were included, in private, proprietary, and public institutions and organizations. Information and data were gathered from all of the constituent groups concerned--the institutions, the accrediting commissions, on-site visiting committees, state licensing agencies, and graduates.

As the COPA project began to unfold, an awareness of several other groups, agencies, and organizations with an interest in nontraditional study became evident. Therefore, the study was organized to provide articulation and coordination with the major groups interested in nontraditional education.

The project was designed from an accreditation perspective with the following purposes:

1. To identify essential elements that should be present in the various types of nontraditional study programs that lead to some type of formal credential for certification or a degree;

2. To develop a classification of the types of nontraditional study programs;

3. To develop appropriate guidelines, criteria, and evaluation procedures for nontraditional educational programs and institutions for use by accrediting commissions and institutions; and

4. To propose a policy to the COPA board that will result in a more uniform approach by accrediting commissions in the evaluation of nontraditional educational programs and assist in the development of quality nontraditional study programs.

Implementation plans for the project were developed in five phases with intermediate steps within each phase.

PHASE I consisted of a status study of a nationally representative group of nontraditional educational programs and institutions.

Step One. Each of the regional accrediting commissions at the post-secondary level was asked to identify at least six nontraditional institutions or programs within its region that had been reviewed or were currently under review for candidate or accreditation status. More than one hundred institutions were nominated and invited to participate in the study. Seventy-seven institutions agreed to be included in the project, and sixty-two actually provided all of the data essential for the study and analysis. (Two of the sixty-two institutions have since closed.)

Step Two. Each of the accrediting commissions provided copies of its accreditation standards and procedures, special evaluation models developed for nontraditional education, and names and addresses of commission members and on-site committee members.

Step Three. Institutions selected for the study were asked to provide copies of bulletins, catalogues, syllabi, and other materials describing programs, state licensing information; names and addresses of administrators, faculty members, and students (including graduates) involved in nontraditional programs; and self-study and evaluation reports.

Step Four. Nineteen agencies, organizations, and studies currently involved in the nontraditional education movement were identified and contacted, and lines of communication were established. These organizations included the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, American Management Association, Postsecondary Education Convening Authority, American College Testing Program, Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education (UC-Berkeley), American Council on Education, Educational Testing Service, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation (USOE), Education Commission of the States, Coalition for Alternatives in Postsecondary Education, Bureau of Social Science Research, Council of Graduate Schools, National University Extension Association, Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Institute of Research, Clearinghouse of Community-Based Free-Standing Educational Institutions, Department of Defense, and the National Association of Institutions for Military Education Services. Numerous other individuals and organizations have expressed an interest in the project and its outcomes.

Step Five. The materials gathered in the previous steps were reviewed and analyzed, and a taxonomy of nontraditional education and institutional characteristics developed. A profile of each of the sixty-two institutions responding fully and their nontraditional programs was developed including information on basic institutional characteristics and the essential elements and components of the nontraditional programs. (A copy of the institutional profiles based on the taxonomy is included in volume 4.)

Step Six. Survey instruments were developed, circulated, and analyzed from a sample of graduates of graduate-level programs. The data from a recently completed survey conducted by the Bureau of Scoial Science Research for the American Council on Education was summarized for use in the COPA project. The BSSR-ACE study involved graduates of undergraduate external degree programs. A national survey on nontraditional education and accreditation was developed for accrediting team members, commission members and institutional personnel. (Reports on these surveys are included in volume 2.)

PHASE II was the development of essential criteria that should be present in the various types and degree levels of nontraditional education programs.

Step One. A review of the current literature and current practice in postsecondary education at all levels was made.

Steps Two, Three, and Four. The taxonomy, essential elements, and classification components of the study were developed.

PHASES III and IV included the development of criteria for evaluation and accreditation of nontraditional institutions and programs and the development of a policy statement on nontraditional education.

PHASE V recommended follow-up activities concerning the implementation of the findings of the project.

## Activities of the Project

Since the official beginning of the COPA project, a number of implementation activities have taken place. These have centered in the work of the Advisory Committee, the selection of the institutions for the study, the articulation conference cosponsored by the project and the Postsecondary Convening Authority, research for the project, and the work of the Presidents' Review Panel.

### The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee for the project was designed to represent the basic constituent groups of COPA and those most involved in the accreditation of nontraditional education. It included the executive officers of the nine regional postsecondary accrediting commissions, one state higher education coordinating officer, one specialized programmatic accrediting executive officer, one national institutional accrediting officer, and one representative of the COPA board. Membership of the Advisory Committee is included in this report as Appendix C.

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Chicago on 13 April 1977 in conjunction with a COPA board meeting. In addition to a general discussion of the overall project, the implementation plans were

presented and discussed. The Advisory Committee set two policies. (1) The institutions to be included in the study must have had at least one visiting committee from an accrediting commission. If an institution was included in the study without having had such a review, a vital set of documents would be missing from which essential data was to be gathered, i.e., self-study reports, visiting committee reports, and records of commission actions. (2) Visiting committee reports would be obtained from the participating institutions rather than from the accrediting commissions. This procedure would respect the current confidentiality policy of the various commissions. Other minor suggestions for revision of the plans were made. A proposal was presented to the Advisory Committee, and approved, to accept the offer of the Postsecondary Education Convening Authority (PECA) to cosponsor an articulation conference to bring together the key representatives of other agencies, organizations, and studies currently active in the nontraditional education movement throughout the United States.

The second meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Annapolis on 2 August 1977. A general progress report on the project was made to the committee at this meeting. Specific information was presented on the institutions that had accepted the invitation to participate in the study and on the results of the PECA conference, which was held in Columbia, Maryland, 6-8 June 1977. It was reported to the Advisory Committee that a request had been made to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for an addition to the grant to add a Presidents' Review Panel to the project, which was the major recommendation of the PECA conference. A correlative activity to make a case study of postsecondary education offered on military bases

was presented and discussed. It was also reported to the Advisory Committee that the first major work session of the project staff and researchers would be held later that month in Atlanta. The meeting concluded with the selection of dates in January for the next meeting of the Advisory Committee, to be held in Atlanta. The first meeting of the Presidents' Review Panel would be held in conjunction with that Advisory Committee meeting.

The third meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Atlanta on 29-31 January 1978 to discuss progress on the implementation of the project and to review the first drafts of three of the research reports. These reports dealt with (1) articulation of the findings of the BSSR-ACE study of undergraduate external degrees with the COPA project, (2) review and analysis of the visiting committee on-site reports for the participating nontraditional institutions and programs. Other items discussed included the Military Base Case Study, the accreditation concerns of the Council for the Assessment of Experiential Learning (CAEL), the offer of the Postsecondary Education Convening Authority to sponsor a second conference for the project to disseminate findings, the follow-up activities for the project with the various accrediting commission executive groups, and the formation of a graduate review panel.

The Advisory Committee held a joint meeting with the Presidents' Review Panel on Monday, January 30.

A fourth meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Pomona, California at Kellogg-West on 2 August 1978 in conjunction with the COPA Summer Conference. The agenda for this meeting included a general overview of progress and a review of six research reports dealing with certificate programs, undergraduate and graduate education, and accreditation.

The structure of the final report was discussed along with dissemination, implementation, and follow-up activities. The final meeting for the Advisory Committee was set for (and held) 6-7 September 1978 in Chicago to review the final drafts of the project reports. It was recommended by the Advisory Committee that the second PECA conference for the project not be held prior to the presentation of the final reports to the COPA board on 10-11 October 1978.

The Selection of Institutions

As mentioned earlier, the institutions invited to participate in the study were recommended by the various postsecondary accrediting commissions of the regional associations. Each commission was asked to nominate at least six institutions from its region that were either nontraditional institutions or institutions with a nontraditional program. It was further decided by the Advisory Committee that institutions to be included should have had at least one visiting committee review so that the documents necessary in such a review would be available to the study.

Once the nominations were received, a letter of invitation was sent to the institutions informing them of the study, outlining the information that would be needed and their responsibilities should they accept the invitation. Seventy-seven institutions accepted the invitation; full information and essential documents and data were received from sixty-two of these. The resulting sample of sixty-two institutions includes a wide variety of types of nontraditional programs and is national in scope. There are six institutions from the Middle States Association, eleven from the New England Association, eight from the North Central Associa-

tion, seven from the Northwest Association, thirteen from the Southern Association, and seventeen from the Western Association. At the beginning of the study, three institutions were applying for accreditation, nine were candidates for accreditation, and forty-nine were accredited. The other participating institution is a consortium of ten accredited institutions. A roster of participants as well as copies of the letter of invitation and follow-up requests are included in this report in Appendix C.

The PECA Articulation Conference

The Postsecondary Education Convening Authority offered to sponsor an articulation conference on the COPA project to bring together representatives of the various agencies, organizations, and other selected studies to enter into a discussion and dialogue on the topic of mutual concern, nontraditional education. With the approval of the project's Advisory Committee that such a conference be held, the director of the COPA project and Mr. Kenneth C. Fischer, director of PECA, met and developed the program and invitational list for the conference. Thirty individuals representing the COPA project and eighteen other groups attended the three-day session in Columbia, Maryland, on 6-8 June 1977. Objectives of the conference were as follows:

1. To provide COPA and its staff and Advisory Committee an opportunity to describe the project's goals, design, and implementation plans;

2. To provide the directors of related studies in progress the opportunity to inform the COPA project staff and Advisory Committee about their research efforts, and to explore ways in which the COPA project could best be articulated with these studies;

3. To provide a forum for groups and organizations with a special interest in the COPA project to share their views with the project staff and Advisory Committee.

The conference program and a list of participants is included in this report in Appendix D.

It was generally agreed that the purposes of the conference were achieved. The major issues and concerns that arose from the discussions were as follows:

1. The COPA project (and the nontraditional education movement in general) should be sure that the focus of its activities is on serving the "public interest."

2. The COPA study should:

   a. Establish and maintain lines of communication with the agencies, organizations, and other studies represented at the conference;

   b. Seek to clarify the "nontraditional" terminology;

   c. Identify and articulate important distinctions between traditional and nontraditional education;

   d. Face the economic and political realities that foster the nontraditional education movement;

   e. Conduct the study with significant involvement of the nontraditional institutions and programs;

   f. Study both the traditional and nontraditional institutions and programs; and

   g. Include the total lifelong learning concept in the study.

3. The COPA project and the total conference group should be sure to:

   a. Reflect on the social context of the work of the respective groups;

   b. Consider the oppressed;

   c. Listen to the learners (nontraditional students);

d. Consider the independent learners; and

e. Consider the public interest.

One specific recommendation from the conference was that some way be found to involve formally a representative group from the nontraditional institutions in the work of the COPA project at the advisory level.

As a result of this recommendation, it was proposed by the COPA project staff that a review panel of presidents be selected to meet throughout the project to review the work and findings of the study. A request was made to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for additional funds to appoint and convene such a panel, and in August 1977 notification was received from Kellogg that an additional $9,000 had been granted for this purpose. The members of the Presidents' Review Panel were:

President Abraham S. Fischler (Chairman)
Nova University
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33314

President Daniel J. Evans
The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington 98505

President Leigh Gerdine
Webster College
470 East Lockwood
St. Louis, Missouri 63119

President James W. Hall
Empire State College
Saratoga Springs, New York 12766

Dr. Donald J. Nolan, Director
Regents External Degree Program
University of the State of New York
Albany, New York 12230

President Peter P. Smith
The Community College of Vermont
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Dr. Charles Wolf, Jr., Director
Rand Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, California 80406

The first meeting of the presidents' panel was held on 30 January 1978 in Atlanta in conjunction with a meeting of the project Advisory Committee. Panel members identified and discussed a number of issues in nontraditional education concerning accreditation that should be addressed in the COPA project. These included the need to identify the following: (1) appropriate "sorting" criteria for nontraditional education, (2) the critical, decisive questions for accreditation of nontraditional education, (3) primary problems of nontraditional education, e.g., too few resources, sense of "profiteering," extensive off-campus centers, graduate education without a complete graduate institution, quality assurance, integrity of traditional education outcomes vs. integrity of nontraditional educational outcomes, and (4) critical indicators of quality.

A second meeting of the presidents' panel was held on 5-6 September 1978 in Chicago, at which time the panel reviewed drafts of the various reports produced by the project. It was the consensus of the group present that the findings of the study were important and that the Summary Report of the Project should be widely distributed. Also, the results of the national survey were considered to be important new findings that would be of interest to educators and accrediting personnel.

Research

Research activities for the project were conducted primarily by the three members of the project staff and the two researchers. While all have contributed to the overall discussions of issues and concepts,

specific areas of responsibility have been assigned and have been independently developed. These assignments included an analysis of the various standards and procedures of the different accrediting commissions, the analysis of graduate-level programs and the survey of a sample of graduates, the review and analysis of the BSSR-ACE study, and the survey of visiting committee members, commission personnel, and institutional personnel.

Three work sessions of several days in length have been held during the project, 9-19 August 1977, 24-27 January 1978, and 16-18 July 1978. Dr. Kenneth Young, president of COPA, attended part of each of the work sessions. All sessions were held in Atlanta. In addition, the project staff and researchers were together for the PECA Articulation Conference.

The August 1977 meeting was a very productive session. Out of this work period came a better conceptualization of the project and the various tasks to be completed. Dr. Patricia Thrash brought before the staff a quote that stimulated within the project staff an awareness of a larger goal for the project than perhaps was first envisioned.

> We're living in topsy-turvy times, and I think that what causes the topsy-turvy feeling is inadequacy of old forms of thought to deal with new experiences. I've heard it said that the only real learning results from hang-ups, where instead of expanding the branches of what you already know, you have to stop and drift laterally for a while until you come across something that allows you to expand the roots of what you already know. Everyone's familiar with that. I think the same thing occurs with whole civilizations when expansion's needed at the roots.[1]

As interpretation, it can be said that postsecondary education and those agencies, such as regional accrediting commissions, which serve it exist within the context of the external realities of time. As the realities change, institutions change, and to remain effective, accreditation must be responsive to these changes. As postsecondary educational institutions have struggled to be responsive to the external realities of the sixties--e.g., the exploding universe, greatly expanded federal aid, dissident students, Viet Nam--and the seventies--e.g., financial exigencies, diminishing student market, public demands, extended campus, increased state regulations--the regional accrediting commissions have also struggled to respond to and accommodate these changes.

The nontraditional education movement is one response to the external realities of time and one evidence of change. A central focus of the movement is a more direct focus on educational outcomes and student performance. The inadequacy of traditional postsecondary educational institutions, and therefore of accreditation, in addressing outcomes may very well be at the root of the concern about the evaluation of nontraditional institutions and programs. The COPA Project on Nontraditional Education, therefore, represents a lateral drift by the accrediting community--a stepping aside to view the total situation--which may provide the basis for a new dimension in the evaluation and accreditation of all postsecondary education.

An emphasis on educational outcomes will place greater demands on educators to re-address the basic questions of "What is education?" "What is learning?" and "How can both be best achieved and appropriately evaluated?"

In other words, it is hoped that the project has achieved its original purposes and goals by producing specific materials that will be useful to the nontraditional educational institutions and programs and the commissions for accreditation; but perhaps the study has also produced a new conceptual framework for the redevelopment of the accreditation process for all of postsecondary education that stresses performance criteria and individual achievement. Such a redevelopment can be of great service to the postsecondary educational community in general and directly address the current concerns over educational outcomes and assurance of quality.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE STATUS OF NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATION

Nontraditional education is not new to the postsecondary educational community in the United States, though the term nontraditional is relatively new. A review of the growth and development of higher education in this country, particularly since the mid-1980s, is replete with unconventional and innovative approaches in content, methodology, and delivery. A distinguishing characteristic of American postsecondary education that is often lauded is its "diversity." Even the final report of the Commission on Nontraditional Study issued in 1973 was entitled Diversity by Design.

Perhaps the first significant benchmark in the diversification of American higher education came in 1862 with the creation of the land-grant colleges. This was followed by the development of the elective system at Harvard in 1900. In 1914 came the establishment of the cooperative extension service with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's establishment of the continuing education center concept, the GI Bill following World War II, and the development and rapid expansion of the community college concept were major new developments of postsecondary education leading into the sixties. The various federal programs of the sixties effected further diversification. These programs included Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the Technical Service Act of 1965, and a number of other programs with a special focus on vocational, career

education and adult education. (It has been estimated that more than three hundred federal programs have now been created to support adult learning at the postsecondary level.) These benchmarks represent a continuous and progressive evolution of a nontraditional approach to the structuring and delivery of postsecondary education for the American people. Each has contributed in its own unique way to a diversification of American higher education.

National studies in the past decade have showed the need for even greater flexibility in higher education. In the Carnegie Commission reports (1968 through 1971), the Newman Reports (1971), and the report of the Commission on Nontraditional Study (1973), strong emphasis was given to allowing reentry to education at periods throughout life and to the further explanation of nontraditional study programs. The final report of the Commission on Nontraditional Study noted:

> . . . Inside the vast U. S. higher education establishment of more than twenty-six hundred institutions and in the world outside it, there is a quickened and even urgent sense that the long-sought dream of universal and broadly based educational opportunity is still much too far from accomplishment. Recent years have been marked by a fertile creation of new institutions, inventions, systems, theories, and practices, some put forward modestly but many heralded as panaceas. Questions touching every facet of existing schools and colleges--what is to be taught, to whom, by whom, how, when, where, why, and to what effect--are being asked. Non-traditional answers are coming swiftly into being, often in piecemeal fashion, and even more often in isolation from one another. Some of these innovations are nearer to accomplishment than ever before; some are near extinction or have already been quickly laid to rest. Many are still under discussion, and the heightened interest they have aroused has brought the possibility of educational transformation to the forefront of educational attention.[2]

As noted in the introduction of this report, the Chairman of the Commission on Nontraditional Study, Dr. Gould, estimates that approximately eight hundred institutions have developed one or more programs of a nontraditional nature to serve in some way a portion of the nontraditional student clientele. In 1970, the Carnegie Commission stated:

> What the American nation needs and expects from higher education in the critical years ahead can be summed up in two phrases: quality of results and equality of access. Our colleges and universities must maintain and strengthen academic quality if our intellectual resources are to prove equal to the challenges of contemporary society. At the same time, the nation's campuses must act energetically and even aggressively to open new channels to equality of educational opportunity.[3]

It now appears that many institutions have responded to the call for new programs energetically and aggressively, due in part to the availability of federal support. The issue of access is already being addressed effectively. With the rapid development of new porgrams for new student groups, however, there has also come a general concern about quality. The issue of quality and results is a focus of the COPA study.

With the evolution of voluntary, nongovernmental, regional accreditation over the past ninety-plus years, educators and the public have come to rely on the accrediting agencies for some assurance of quality in institutions and programs. In effect, the accrediting agencies have become legitimizers of new and different institutions and programs as they have developed, and as such accrediting agencies have become one of the most influential forces in the development of American higher education. Prior to this century, American higher education in general resisted innovative and nontraditional study programs. The education community

and the publics are now looking to accreditation for assurances concerning the quality of the nontraditional education movement. The COPA project has reviewed a representative sample of nontraditional institutions and programs to see how well the accrediting agencies have dealt with this area. In so doing the project has also been able to gain some insight into the scope and structure of nontraditional education. The remainder of this section will discuss briefly the findings of the study that relate to the status of nontraditional forms of American postsecondary education.

## What Is Nontraditional Education?

One of the interesting observations about the nontraditional education movement is the lack of a clear definition for the term nontraditional. When asked what is meant by nontraditional education, most practitioners respond by giving a description of a particular program or institution. Previous studies have also not been able to produce a clear and precise definition of the term.

The definition produced by the Commission on Nontraditional Study is the one most often used and quoted:

> Nontraditional study is more an attitude than a system and thus can never be defined except tangentially. This attitude puts the student first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's need than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity rather than uniform prescription, and deemphasizes time, space, and even course requirements in favor of competence and, where applicable, performance.[4]

Unfortunately, many of those who have used this definition have not gone beyond the passage quoted, leaving out some of the other important elements given. The Commission stated further:

> It has concern for the learner of any age and circumstance, for the degree aspirant as well as the person who finds sufficient reward in enriching life through constant, periodic, or occasional study. This attitude is not new; it is simply more prevalent than it used to be. It can stimulate exciting and high-quality educational progress; it can also, unless great care is taken to prevent the freedom it offers, be the unwitting means to a lessening of academic rigor and even to charlatanism.[5]

In its totality this statement embraces the range and scope of the nontraditional education movement remarkably well. A more specific and precise definition, with which many educators would be more comfortable, would tend to enforce a rigidity and conformity on a movement that must remain open and free to foster educational innovations of "academic rigor" and quality. In other words, a precise definition would probably result in a "traditionalization" of the nontraditional.

In an analysis of all current attempts to define nontraditional education, Edward G. Simpson concludes that they were made from either philosophical precepts of the movement (attitudes and ideals) or the construction and discussion of models. His study identifies as a basic premise underlying all of the previous attempts to define nontraditional education, "that the student's goals were of paramount concern rather than the institution's."[6] This finding is consistent with the original definition and recommendations of the Commission on Nontraditional Study and, in general, is consistent with the findings of the COPA project.

This general agreement on the primary purpose or goal of nontraditional education also seems to imply, if not specify, an agreement on the assurance of quality issue.

In making its analysis of institutions and programs, the COPA project developed a framework for a profile of nontraditional education divided into two major parts, Institutional Characteristics (General) and Nontraditional Characteristics (Elements/Components). (See Figure 1.) From the profile, an outline of which follows, came information for the taxonomy of identification and classification of nontraditional education.

It is the consensus of the project staff that the essential elements and components for a nontraditional educational institution or program are represented in the profile and that an appropriate development and application of each element or component will provide the framework for an effective and acceptable nontraditional institution or program. The components and elements are also equally applicable to traditional institutions and programs.

The resulting taxonomy for the identification and classification of institutions is shown in Figure 2.

Any variety of combinations of characteristics, components, and elements can be configured according to their mode (traditional or nontraditional). In the final analysis, the basic character of the institution or program (traditional or nontraditional) can then be determined by a review of the total educational effort.

The question obviously arises about weighting the elements or components. If this were done, the greater weight would probably be

Figure 1

Nontraditional Institution/Program Profile

I. Institutional Characteristics (General)
   A. Purpose
   B. Sponsorship/Governance
   C. Size: _____Students _____Faculty
   D. Degree or Credentials Offered
   E. Costs: (Tuition and Fees)
   F. Financial Data: ____Budget ____Endowment ____Support
   G. Recognition/Accreditation
      1. State Licensing
      2. Regional Accreditation
      3. Other

II. Nontraditional Characteristics (Elements/Components)
   A. Definition of Nontraditional Learning
   B. Characteristics/Elements/Components of Nontraditional Program(s)
      1. Purpose of Program (Goals and Objectives)
      2. Curriculum/Faculty
      3. Delivery System:
         (a) Time/Space Requirements--Residency
         (b) Independent Study Utilization
         (c) External Nature
         (d) Media Utilization
         (e) Other
      4. Methods for Learning/Instruction
      5. Admissions Requirements
      6. Completion Requirements--Awarding of Credits
      7. Advanced Standing Processes:
         (a) Credit by Examination
         (b) Experiential Learning
         (c) Transfer of Credit
         (d) Other
      8. Advising and Counseling
      9. Learning Resources
      10. Evaluation Systems:
         (a) Students
         (b) Program
      11. Costs:
         (a) Tuition and Fees
         (b) Program Costs (Budget)
   C. Recognition/Accreditation
      1. State Licensing
      2. Regional Accreditation
      3. Specialized
      4. Other

Figure 2

Sample Taxonomy for Determining Traditional/Nontraditional Mode of an Institution or Program
(T = Traditional, N = Nontraditional)

| Institutional Characteristics | Purpose | Program/Curriculum/Faculty | Delivery System | Methods for Learning | Admissions | Completion Requirements (Outcomes) | Advanced Standing Processes | Advising and Counseling | Learning Resources | Evaluation Systems | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution A | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | T |
| Institution B | T | T | N | T | T | T | T | T | T | T | T |
| Institution C | T | T | N | N | T | T | T | T | T | T | T |
| Institution D | T | T | N | N | T | T | N | T | T | N | T |
| Institution E | T | T | N | N | T | T | N | N | N | N | T |
| Institution F | T | N | N | N | T | T | N | N | N | N | N |
| Institution G | T | N | N | N | T | T | N | N | N | N | N |
| Institution H | T | N | N | N | T | N | N | N | N | N | N |
| Institution I | T | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N |
| Institution J | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N | N |

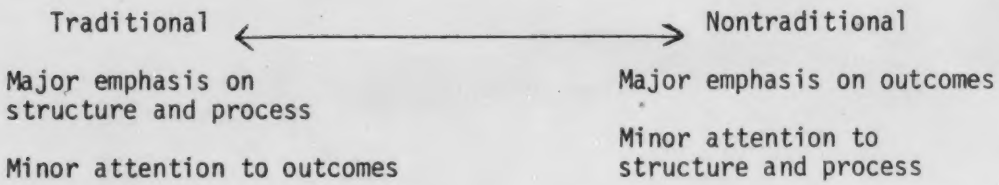
given to Purpose, Program/Curriculum/Faculty, and Completion Requirements (Outcomes). However, it is the opinion of the project staff that the components and elements are of equal importance and that they are all essential to a well-developed institution or program.

Postsecondary education, then, should be viewed as a continuum, with the traditional institution or program at one end and the nontraditional institution or program at the opposite end. (See Figure 3.) Institutions predominantly traditional in character usually place primary emphasis on structure and process with less attention given to outcomes. Institutions predominantly nontraditional in character usually place primary emphasis on outcomes with less attention to structure and process.

The institutional profiles developed in the COPA study and the taxonomy with the essential elements and components are included in volume 4 of the reports of the project and discussed more fully there.

Figure 3

Postsecondary Education Continuum



## Scope of Nontraditional Education

The field of nontraditional education has no boundaries. It has come to involve every level of postsecondary education--noncredit, certificate, associate, baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, and post-graduate--in a wide variety of locations, in formal and informal settings, and it generally relies heavily on some form of individualized and independent study. Much of nontraditional education involves the offering of educational programs at remote sites with a heavy dependence on part-time faculty. Nontraditional programs and institutions have usually been designed to serve the "new" students who are most often older and employed full-time.

Nontraditional programs generally have nontraditional objectives and outcomes. In his work on this project Paul Dressel has noted that, "Nontraditional education is education which can be provided in nontraditional ways by nontraditional teachers to nontraditional students seeking nontraditional outcomes." Such an open-ended approach to the identification of the nontraditional mode leads to an observation and conclusion that what is nontraditional for one institution may not be for another. Therefore, the scope of the field for nontraditional study is delimited in very few ways.

Based on the taxonomy developed, the project delineated six general classifications of institutions and programs. These are:

1. Traditional institutions with traditional programs and processes, but with traditional outcomes.

2. Traditional institutions with some nontraditional programs and processes, but with traditional outcomes.

3. Traditional institutions with some nontraditional programs and processes, including outcomes.

4. Nontraditional institutions with some traditional programs and processes, including outcomes.

5. Nontraditional institutions with some traditional programs and processes, but with nontraditional outcomes.

6. Nontraditional institutions with nontraditional programs and processes, including outcomes.

Among the various types of programs reviewed in the COPA project that are nontraditional, based on some variation of the essential elements and components from the institutional profile and taxonomy, are:

external degrees
independent study
competency-based education
modular curriculum
multimedia instruction
off-campus operations
learning contracts
week-end college
military base education
contracting with other institutions or agencies
educational brokering
experiential learning
assessment of prior learning
community-based education
corporate-based education
government-based education
examining institution

In the national survey conducted as a part of the study, the 1,319 respondents to the survey selected the following types of programs from a prescribed list and ranked them as the most representative of non-traditional education:

1st--External degrees granted on the basis of examined achievement without required periods of study or residency.

2nd--External degree programs offering off-campus, independent study through instructional systems, programs, and materials designed for home study.

3rd--Contract degree programs, individualized not only in terms of instructional means but also in outcomes and achievements expected of graduates.

4th--Competency-based curricula within conventional institutions.

5th--Educational brokering efforts that offer no instruction or credit, but which link learner interest and needs to educational resources such as instruction, assessment of prior learning, and counseling.

6th--Off-campus, conventional instruction such as military base programs often using part-time and adjunct faculty.

7th--Courses and/or degrees offered by an accredited institution through a contractual relationship with another institution or an unaccredited organization or agency.

It is obvious from the national survey and the review of the literature in the field that the external degree in its various forms is considered by most individuals as a primary form of nontraditional education if not the principal form. However, it does not represent the form most frequently used by institutions, nor does it encompass the majority of individuals served by nontraditional education. The BSSR-ACE study of the undergraduate external degree carefully documents this fact. That study identified all of the undergraduate external degree programs operating in the United States as of the fall of 1976 and found 244 degree programs within 134 institutions. Ninety percent of the institutions and programs were either accredited or candidates for accreditation. Enrollments were slightly more than 54,000, and graduates of these programs since their beginning numbered only 18,421. When compared to the more than eleven million students enrolled in all postsecondary institutions in 1976, external degree enrollments represent slightly less than

one-half of one percent. Of course, the significance of the number in no way lessens the significance or importance of the programs to the individuals enrolled. A summary of the BSSR-ACE study has been prepared and is included in volume 2 of these reports.

We have not been able to discover comprehensive, reliable data on the current number of institutions involved in nontraditional education (other than the external degree) or on the number of students involved in all types of formal nontraditional educational programs. In our own survey of some 1,300 institutions, 78 percent indicated that they offered nontraditional programs. Of these, 73 percent indicated that approximately 10 percent of their total educational effort was nontraditional in nature, while the remaining 17 percent indicated that almost 25 percent of their programs were nontraditional. Five percent of the institutions with nontraditional programs indicated that a full 50 percent of their total educational effort was nontraditional. Sixty-two percent of those surveyed also indicated that they plan to develop and offer new nontraditional programs within the next two years. The Commission on Nontraditional Study estimated in 1973 that there were eighty million adults in the potential market for nontraditional education. In 1978, the Future Directions for a Learning Society program of the College Board estimated that 58.4 million adults were involved in some formal type of learning. Of this number, 12.4 million are enrolled in educational institutions while 46 million are studying through non-school organizations. Though the focus of the COPA project is on the institutions of postsecondary education that offer nontraditional study and are eligible for regional accreditation, it is important that the scope of the total nontraditional movement be seen in proper perspective.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, and Problems

The strengths of the nontraditional education movement are many. After a decade of struggles since the beginning of the movement in the 1960s, it is apparent from the results of a number of recent studies and the COPA project that diversification of postsecondary education in the United States to serve new students in new ways is taking hold in a positive way. This success is due primarily to the dedicated work of a few educators, the support of private foundations, motivation by state and federal agencies, requests from educational consumer groups (students, community, business, industry, and professional), and the general support of the concept of nontraditional education by many other educators and accreditation officials.

In the COPA national survey, administrators of postsecondary institutions selected and ranked from a preset list the following factors as most influential in the establishment of nontraditional programs.

Ist--Needs of the community (business, industry, professional)

2nd--Student requests

3rd--Basic interests in curricular reform

4th--Educational dream of a top administrator

5th--Declining traditional enrollments

6th--Meeting competition from other institutions

7th--Institutional financial problems

8th--Stimulus from state-wide coordinating boards

9th--Accreditation standards, policies, and procedures that allow recognition

Perhaps the greatest strength of nontraditional education today lies in the apparent support for the concept by administrators of postsecondary institutions and programs. In the COPA survey, 94.5 percent of the administrators who responded agreed that the concept of nontraditional education is sound. Eighty-five percent went further to agree that a nontraditional degree program was a logical option within the philosophy and structure of their own institutions.

Another obvious strength of the nontraditional education movement is in the quality of the programs offered. For the most part, institutions have worked diligently to develop and implement nontraditional programs that are academically sound and acceptable. Substantial evidence for this observation is found in the fact that most institutions involved in nontraditional education are accredited. The BSSR-ACE study found that 90 percent of the 244 external degree programs offered by 134 institutions either are accredited or are making progress toward accreditation. In the COPA project, all but three of the sixty-two sample institutions (offering more than one hundred nontraditional programs) are accredited. Another supporting factor in the quality of nontraditional education is the successful experiences of nontraditional degree holders. The BSSR-ACE study surveyed 2,647 graduates of external degree programs. Though this study did not specifically deal with issues of program quality, it documented the acceptance and effective utilization of the nontraditional degree, which must be considered a positive indication of quality. In the two areas of achieving access to further education and achieving work-related benefits, the study found that most nontraditional degree holders achieved one or

both of these goals. The study concluded the report of its findings with these significant observations:

> Within the limitation and boundaries which were set for this report, we feel that the data presented provide valuable baseline information in an area where to date only anecdotal evidence and ideological rhetoric have been available to those who sought to judge the usefulness of external degree programs for students in need of new options.
>
> Furthermore, in our opinion, it seems clear that credentialling benefits can accrue to individual external degree program graduates. On this basis, these programs should be considered as legitimate educational alternatives by prospective students, their sponsors and educators.[7]

Other strengths of the nontraditional education movement, which will not be discussed in this report but are important and significant, concern the expansion of postsecondary education to serve the older and usually employed student with a diversity of subject areas and program options.

The nontraditional education movement, though generally strong today, is faced with a number of serious issues which must be faced by those in responsible positions if the movement is not to become bogged down by its weaknesses. These weaknesses can be classified as either internal issues or external issues, with a few extending into both categories.

Internal issues generally relate to the various processes and constituent groups that make up an institution. A significant number of the nontraditional programs that are part of traditional institutions have been set up as separate entities within those institutions. While this mode of operation was probably necessary in the early days of the movement to circumvent strong resistance from established institutional groups, it is a questionable practice today if nontraditional education is to be accepted

as a legitimate part of the postsecondary education community. Nontraditionalists and nontraditional programs should work within the framework of the normal institutional structure and processes of purpose, governance, finance, organization, quality assurance and controls, curricula development and approval, credentials, and evaluation systems. When nontraditional programs are created separately and operated independently of the normal academic and administrative processes of an institution, there is suspicion and distrust of the unconventional programs by faculty and academic administrative groups that have responsibility for the academic integrity of the institution as a whole. If the nontraditionalists work within the normal structure of the institution, then the traditionalists have a responsibility to accept and accommodate them, reviewing and modifying the established processes if necessary. The creation and maintenance of a dichotomy between the traditional and nontraditional is an unfortunate situation that does not benefit any of the constituencies of postsecondary education. Regardless of methodology involved, any credential earned by a student from a postsecondary education institution should represent the academic integrity of that institution. Of course, the complexities of achieving such a unity of educational effort are difficult at best. The lack of internal cohesiveness in the development, administration, and assessment of postsecondary education by institutions is probably the greatest weakness of postsecondary education, traditional or nontraditional.

The lack of cohesiveness that exists today in many of the nontraditional programs is illustrated by data from the national survey. While there was a strong endorsement of the concept of nontraditional (94.5 percent), there was a strong disagreement (74.5 percent) with the statement that college

and university faculties generally support the concept. Also, even though 85 percent of those responding indicated that the establishment of a nontraditional degree was a logical option for their institutions and 66 percent indicated that they had plans to develop such programs within the next two years, only 49 percent said that the nontraditional degree is comparable in quality to the traditional degree. This interesting set of perceptions by institutional and program administrators provides ample ground for future debate by academics. It is our opinion that the basic issue is one of institutional legitimization of the nontraditional as academically sound. This issue can best be addressed by active participation of all parties responsible for quality assurance in all postsecondary educational programs.

External issues that cause concern about nontraditional programs and institutions usually emerge from their relations to other institutions, government agencies, clientele, and public groups. We cannot overemphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining good relationships with the various groups critical to the successful development, implementation, and acceptance of a nontraditional institution or program. The failure of some nontraditionalists to attend to these and other appropriate external relationships is a weakness in the current nontraditional movement. This failure by some has hurt the cause of nontraditional education in general: It provoked a solidification of resistence by other institutions, a proliferation of rules and regulations by state and federal agencies, the development of additional policies and procedures by accrediting agencies, and a questioning in the minds of potential clientele and other public groups concerning the integrity and quality of nontraditional programs and institutions.

This we refer to as a problem of perception. Many of the critics of nontraditional education are critics because of inadequate communications between the nontraditionalist and the traditionalist. In many cases, perceptions concerning nontraditional learning forms are based on inadequate information and hearsay rather than on actual experience and knowledge, and this has led to a general misconception about the nature and values of nontraditional education.

Accreditation and state authorization procedures provide a bridge to both internal and external issues and will be discussed in chapter 2 of this report.

The major problems facing nontraditional institutions and programs appear to fall into three categories. One, with the rapid development of the nontraditional movement, many institutions have moved too quickly into the development of new programs for new students without fully developing the elements necessary to have a program or institution of acceptable quality. A second problem is the entrepreneur with charlatan motives. Both individuals and institutions that have a primary goal of personal "profit" in some form may have deceptive motives. In his work on the project, Kay Andersen, executive director of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, has noted that, "in a crass sense, (to the entrepreneur) nontradition has come to mean little more than poor quality programs delivered anywhere to any student for purposes of monetary gain or survival." The quickness with which the nontraditional movement developed and expanded has made it vulnerable to the educational huckster. A caution in this area was also noted in the reports of the Commission on Nontraditional Study, quoted earlier.

A third problem in nontraditional education is a questioning of some of the degrees it awards. Institutions or programs that generally have nontraditional students, objectives, curricula, faculty, and outcomes and award nontraditional degrees or credentials appear to raise few questions. Problems exist where a traditional degree nomenclature is used for a nontraditional educational experience without adequate attention given to the criteria and elements normally associated with the particular traditional degree. Paul Dressel has noted this problem in his work for the project with this observation: "Insisting on being nontraditional in every respect, the nontraditionalist finally succumbs to the traditional in that he wishes to give a degree which has traditional significance. And it is at this point that the major problems of recognizing and accrediting such degrees arises."

This problem is also addressed by the Task Force on Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education in its report "Recommendations on Credentialling Educational Accomplishments," issued in the spring of 1978. While recognizing and advocating that the postsecondary community modify its present credit and credential system to accommodate and recognize learning attained in a variety of circumstances in order to serve present day educational and social needs, the task force is strong in its recommendations that relate to preserving the traditional meaning and value of a degree:

> Degrees will continue to be socially useful only if they retain their uniqueness. That uniqueness flows from the historical and central role of faculties in designing educational programs, in establishing requirements for degrees, and in certifying and setting standards for educational accomplishments.

> Qualified faculties, with substantial and academic independence with their responsibility delegated to them by boards of control, and with peer review provided by nongovernmental accreditation, are the best sources in society for the expertise needed to exercise the degree-granting function. In a complex, technological society, education for work requirements must be balanced with cultural considerations in education. While the importance of education for work cannot be minimized, neither can the importance of education designed to advance the understanding and quality of cultural values, the environment, the human condition, and to develop analytical, communication, quantitative, and synthesizing skills. The composition and organization of faculties, though not guaranteeing the avoidance of narrow, self-seeking interests, tends to bring balance to these considerations.
>
> External degree programs embodying the above characteristics for granting degrees are useful and valid means of certifying educational accomplishment and should be considered acceptable alternatives to traditional degree programs.

RECOMMENDATION

> Institutions or organizations that lack the proper degree-granting structure described above should limit their awards to certificates or other credentials whose designations are clearly distinguishable from degrees. Undergraduate degrees should not be awarded by any institution for programs that lack a general/liberal education component.[8]

The concerns of Dressel and the recommendations of the ACE Task Force are consistent and support the findings in the COPA project, presented earlier in this section, that postsecondary education should not be dichotomized into traditional and nontraditional segments. Such separation provides the framework for a questioning of the validity of the credential offered by the nontraditional component.

In summary it may be said that the status of nontraditional study is good. It is a movement that is still in the developmental process, and as such it is an evolving, dynamic entity in American postsecondary education. The nature and structure of the programs and institutions (organization,

finance, students, curricula, delivery systems, and assessment systems) are in a state of progressive flux. There are strengths and weaknesses in the movement. There are problems that must be resolved as there are in education at large. It is our hope that the findings of this project will contribute to a strengthening of all of American postsecondary education.

## CHAPTER 2

## THE STATUS OF ACCREDITATION OF NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATION

The primary responsibility for the development of postsecondary education in the United States historically has rested within education itself, in concert with various groups reflecting social, religious, and civil needs. Excellence has been a product of a decentralized, independent "system" of postsecondary education. With a few exceptions, such as the New York Regents, the means employed to assess and improve the American processes have traditionally been in the hands of those other than government--local, state, or federal. As a result of this self-directed, self-regulated process, a variety of autonomous accrediting organizations have emerged to give guidance and provide evaluation for self-improvement of educational institutions, which have sought to fulfill their missions according to the educational needs of their constituents.

Accreditation came into being in the state of New York in the late 1700s in response to a need for a commonality of acceptable practices and admission standards among educational institutions. The first voluntary, nongovernmental, regional accrediting association was formed by the New England states in 1885. By the 1890s the Middle States, North Central, and Southern associations had been established. The Northwest was founded in 1917 and the Western in 1948, giving a national scope to regional accreditation.

## The Concept of Accreditation

Voluntary, nongovernmental accreditation has since developed with two basic forms, institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation is conducted by the six regional associations, each serving a specific geographic area of the United States. (Currently, there are also four national accrediting agencies for special-purpose institutions.) Specialized accreditation is conducted by more than fifty professional programmatic accrediting agencies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Specialized accrediting developed as the result of a need by various professional groups to exercise quality assurance in the educational preparation of members of their professions. Usually an institution of higher education will possess both institutional and specialized accreditation. Institutional and specialized accreditation parallel and complement each other. While specialized accrediting agencies are concerned with specific educational and professional requirements, institutional accrediting agencies are primarily concerned with the operational and quality assurance processes of the total institution.

Since the founding of regional accreditation, the purpose and functions have undergone significant change: "Admissions and the maintenance of minimum academic standards were the two initial problems which accreditation was devised to meet."[9] By 1960 the basic functions of accreditation identified by L. E. Blauch were:

1. To encourage institutions to improve their programs by providing standards on criteria established by competent bodies;

2. To facilitate the transfer of students from one institution to another;

3. To inform those who employ graduates or who examine its graduates for admission to professional practice, the quality of training the graduates have received; and

4. To raise the standards of education for the practice of a profession.[10]

In 1970 the U.S. Office of Education published criteria listing nine functions of accreditation:

1. Certifying that an institution has met established standards;

2. Assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions;

3. Assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credit;

4. Helping to identify institutions and programs for the investment of public and private funds;

5. Protecting an institution against harmful internal and external pressures;

6. Creating goals for self-improvement of weaker programs and stimulating a general raising of standards among educational institutions;

7. Involving the faculty and staff comprehensively in institutional evaluation and planning;

8. Establishing a criterion for professional certification, licensure, and for upgrading courses offering such preparation; and

9. Providing one basis for determining eligibility for Federal assistance.[11]

Currently, the regional accrediting associations claim to focus on two major concerns, educational quality and institutional integrity, while continuing to promote institutional self-improvement and to protect the institution from undue and improper external and internal pressures.

Because accreditation is still conducted by voluntary, nongovernmental organizations, it is a process of self-regulation of the institution by other institutions, with the accrediting agencies having no legal authority to control or regulate postsecondary institutions. An institution voluntarily seeks accreditation by agreeing to submit itself to an evaluation both from within and by its peers. Upon achieving accreditation, membership within the agency is usually automatic, thus allowing the institution to join its peers in the organizational processes through a representative from of governance. In his research work for the COPA project, John Harris has identified accreditation as,

> . . . essentially institutional membership in a voluntary association of institutions. The authority of accreditation is the democratically expressed will of member institutions. It is not the administration of government decrees. Hence, its goals and purposes change with the new circumstances of new days as well as changes in the composition of the membership per se. This is to say the principles and policies of accreditation are not like regulations and executive orders of a large and distant body. Rather, accreditation policies and standards are essentially the rules of membership in a 'voluntary' association.

Regional and specialized accrediting agencies are relatively autonomous bodies. Prior to 1975 there was no single national organization for the control or coordination of accreditation. An informal coordination function existed by communciations among three formal agencies: the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (FRACHE), the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA, for the professional agencies), and the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility Unit of the Bureau of Higher Education of the United States Office of Education. In 1975 the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation was

formed by a merger of FRACHE and NCA to provide an organization for the coordination and representation of accreditation at the national level.

Historically, changes in the accreditation process have followed major modifications in the nature and structure of postsecondary education. This passive role is appropriate for accreditation because it must be responsive to change as it occurs within the institutions. Rarely have the accrediting associations assumed an active or leadership role in initiating change, but they have generally encouraged and supported new developments in postsecondary education and have worked cooperatively with institutions in the implementation and assessment of educational innovations. Standards and procedures for evaluating institutional effectiveness in providing quality education normally evolve from current practices of accredited institutions. In other words, accredited institutions cooperate in the establishment of appropriate criteria for an accreditable institution and voluntarily agree to a periodical evaluation of themselves by their peers. Once the standards or criteria for evaluation have been set, the accrediting associations assume a more active role in postsecondary education through assessment and evaluation against the established standards or criteria for reaffirmation of or initial accreditation.

## Accreditation and Nontraditional Education

As the nontraditional education movement began to unfold in the late sixties, the accrediting associations accommodated the early developments, which were few in number, through an "exception-to-the-rules" process. Goddard, Antioch, Oklahoma, Maryland, and South Florida

are colleges and universities exemplary of accreditation's early encounter with the nontraditional movement. The rapid expansion of institutions into new learning forms and structures for new student clientele, as well as the creation of totally new institutions of a nontraditional nature, presented the accrediting associations with a need to examine their procedures to see what changes might be needed in order to deal with the new institutions and programs effectively.

In 1972 Norman Burns, executive director of the North Central Association and chairman of FRACHE, appointed a committee representing the six regional accrediting associations and nontraditional education, "to identify and describe the various types of instructional and institutional arrangements which depart from traditional patterns and recommend means for evaluating such educational activities for accrediting purposes."[12] Paul Dressel of Michigan State University, a principal researcher for the COPA study, was appointed chairman of this Committee on Nontraditional Study. After a year of research, the committee presented its report to the Federation for its consideration and use. From the report was drawn the "Interim Statement of Accreditation and Nontraditional Study," which was approved by the Executive Council of FRACHE on 14 March 1973 and was circulated to the various accrediting commissions for use with accredited institutions developing nontraditional programs and with newly created institutions of a nontraditional nature seeking initial accreditation. In his letter of transmittal of the committee report to FRACHE, Dressel states, "The Committee is in full accord that these innovations have merit which should be considered for adaptation in traditional programs."

The "Interim Statement" begins with an endorsement of the movement, asserting that "accreditation procedures for nontraditional programs should encourage innovation and imaginative approaches to providing quality education whether in new institutions or in those already accredited." While the FRACHE policy called for a move toward assessment of educational results, it also included an important caveat that accreditation has a major concern for institutional improvement and "that attention to outcomes only, without considering the relation of these to the environments and educational processes, would be of little assistance to either traditional or nontraditional programs in raising questions and providing suggestions for improvement." The statement concludes with a set of general policies and guidelines that were intended to form a framework for use by accrediting organizations and nontraditional institutions and programs for evaluation purposes. Prior to the 1973 statement on nontraditional study, the regional accrediting commissions had worked from a 1970 Federation policy statement on innovation. The statement, which was brief and conceptual in nature, noted that the Federation "welcomes perceptive and imaginative experimentation which aims at intensifying the effectiveness of higher education . . . [and] insists only that new departures or adaptations be consistent with an institution's purposes and objectives as originally established or as modified to accommodate new conditions."

Both FRACHE statements evince a reasonably quick and positive reaction by the regional accrediting associations to the nontraditional education movement. Individual accrediting commissions responded to

the FRACHE policies in a variety of ways to accommodate the nontraditional. One example to the specific actions taken is the extensive research activity of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in updating the Standards of the College Delegate Assembly. A 1969-70 survey of all of the collegiate members of SACS concerning their public service activities resulted in a revision in 1971 of Standard Nine, Special Activities, to include specific information concerning nontraditional study. This was the first standard of an accrediting association to recognize nontraditional education explicitly. As a result of research in nontraditional education by the Commission on Colleges of SACS, a committee of the Commission was appointed to review the accreditation procedures to determine if they were effective for nontraditional programs of member institutions and applicable to newly created nontraditional institutions that might seek accreditation. The review did not reveal a significant presumption of traditionality. However, some special provisons and additions to the procedures and standards seemed appropriate to encourage and accommodate nontraditional study in the direct assessment of graduates for the purposes of accreditation. The following statement was developed and approved by the Commission and College Delegate Assembly of SACS in December 1975 as an addition to the Standards:

> If a program of a member institution is at variance with the Standards, the institution is expected to submit the program for review by appropriate committees of the Commission. Institutions applying for initial accreditation whose programs are at variance with the Standards must follow the same proceudre. In general, variances are allowed on the basis of credible evidence that one or more

> specific elements of the Standards is educationally dysfunctional with reference to the unconventional characteristics of the institution or its programs, and credible evidence, also, of evaluation procedures which certify the effective learning outcomes of students and so validate the unconventional effort in terms of its acceptable educational purpose. All member institutions are encouraged to develop reliable instruments for the direct assessment of graduates. If direct assessment is to be employed as a route to special recognition sufficient to warrant a variance from Standards, the institution must establish that it has clear educational goals and objectives which are sufficiently explicit to be assessable and which presuppose in their realization the learning necessary for successful performance in the fields for which students are being educated; maintains a system of educational delivery which embraces and affords the necessary learning; applies performance criteria which, if met, would reasonably assure graduates of acceptance in fields for which they are being prepared; and employs instruments for the assessment of the attainments of students which would be acceptable if independently examined by experts in the field.

As a result of this change in the accreditation procedures, a joint subcommittee of the standing committees on Admission to Membership and Standards and Reports has been established to review nontraditional institutions and programs. A revision of Standard Nine was adopted in 1977 based on a follow-up to the 1969-70 study. In this revision, further refinement was made to the sections dealing with nontraditional education and off-campus activities, and new statements were added on experiential learning and contractual relationships with other institutions, agencies, and organizations. The adoption of this policy by the Southern Association represented the first formal procedure by an accrediting association emphasizing the assessment of student achievement as an element in the considerations for accreditation.

In the analysis in this project of all of the COPA-recognized accrediting association policies, procedures, and standards, few were found to have specific statements concerning nontraditional education except those of the regionals. All of the regionals have addressed nontraditional studies either by developing special procedures or adapting existing procedures to accommodate nontraditional study. The regional associations have also operated within the general framework of the FRACHE policies (which were subsequently recognized by COPA in 1975) for nontraditional study. These policies include "Substantive Change." "Accreditation of Operationally Separate Units," "Study Abroad Programs," "Innovation," Interim Statement on Accreditation and Non-traditional Study," "Interim Guidelines on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations," and "Postsecondary Education Porgrams Conducted by Accredited or Candidate Institutions on Military Bases." It is obvious from our review that the regional accrediting associations have worked diligently and rather effectively with the nontraditional institutions and programs as the movement has developed. The accreditation experience of the sixty-two institutions reviewed closely in this study and of the 244 external degree programs in the BSSR-ACE study provide sufficient and reliable evidence of this fact. A report for the COPA project on the analysis of the regional accrediting commissions' policies, procedures, and standards and the FRACHE policies has been prepared by Kay Andersen and is included in volume 4 of the reports on the study.

## Evaluation of Nontraditional Education

While the accreditation of nontraditional education appears to have been accomplished in relatively good order by the regional associations, this does not mean that there have not been problems encountered. The current format for the evaluation of an institution, traditional or non-traditional, for accreditation purposes is essentially a process-oriented model (though not necessarily exclusively so). Variations exist within and among the regional commissions to recognize and accommodate the diversity of types of institutions with which they deal--e.g., public, private, proprietary, and special purpose--in accreditation activities. Variations may also occur within those components of the process model that deal with educational programs. This model is referred to as a "process model" because the primary emphasis in the various components is keyed to descriptive materials and the evaluation of the effectiveness of institutional processes--e.g., administration, organization, financial resources, educational program, student services, and physical resources--in achieving the institution's purpose and mission. Attention is also given to the environmental conditions conducive for positive educational achievements.

The process model generally operates with the following components: (1) Documentation--a set of documents prepared by the institution, including self-studies, new program prospecti, annual audits, and other relevant studies such as state agency and specialized accreditation studies; (2) On-site Review--an on-site evaluation report based on established standards or criteria prepared by a team of peers selected and trained by the accrediting commission; (3) Institutional Response--the institution's written

response to its self-study and the on-site report; (4) Commission Review--review committee reports and recommendations; and (5) Commission Action--commission action on candidate or accreditation status. Each accrediting commission maintains a data base that includes the history of the institution's accreditation experiences and basic institutional descriptive information that is usually up-dated annually. This base of information supports the on-going process of accreditation evaluations, review, and decisions by the various commissions.

It is only in the first component of this model, documentation, that some attention is usually given to the assessment of student performance. In self-studies an institution may address outcomes, but rarely do institutional responses or commission reviews and commission actions address or weigh evidence of educational outcomes in making decisions on accreditation. A few notable exceptions do exist, such as the work of the Middle States Association in the accreditation of the New York Regents External Degree and the Southern Association's work with Nova University's External Degree Programs. Both institutions rely heavily on the demonstration of competencies and the examination of proficiencies for the awarding of degrees, and in both cases the accrediting associations have taken the results of student assessments into consideration in making decisions on accreditation.

When problems do occur in the evaluation of nontraditional study they appear to be in two basic areas: (1) the adaptation of the process-oriented evaluation model of the accrediting body to an evaluation of the nontraditional and (2) the inadequacy of the operational processes and procedures of the nontraditional institution or program. Many times

there simply is not enough to look at to be comfortable with the decision that must be made. Procedurally, the accrediting agencies have had little difficulty in working with most of the nontraditional institutions and programs. Variations on the process model, such as that developed by the North Central Association and described in its Quarterly,

> . . . required more staff time and institutional resources in the development of an evaluation design that was sequential in nature. Typically, the evaluation design included such elements as the purpose of the evaluation; desired evaluator competencies; supporting material for the evaluation team; and accrediting options to be considered.[13]

The sequential evaluation used by several of the regionals in the evaluation of an institution that operates in geographically disperse locations is further explained:

> When a sequential evaluation included visits to a number of sites, often instruments were developed to assure consistency in the evaluative criteria applied, as two-person sub-teams from the total team sites. Teams were more complex, in that evaluators from other regionals were required if the institutions to be visited had sites in another accrediting region; and evaluators chosen for the team were experienced evaluators of demonstrated competence who were willing to be open to the evaluation of a different form of learning.[14]

A final step in this variation of the process is to see that the decision-making bodies of the accrediting commissions have been fully informed as to the special nature of the evaluation and the institutions to be considered. A full report on this model of evaluation has been prepared by Patricia Thrash and is included in Appendix A of this report.

Two serious shortcomings have resulted from the zeal of some non-traditionalists to focus on educational outcomes. First, they have often neglected to identify, define, and develop those elements necessary for

an adequate "process" to insure the integrity and quality of the learning opportunities provided. Interestingly enough, we have also found that very few of the nontraditional institutions and programs have developed new and exceptionally good models for the assessment of educational outcomes, and this is their second shortcoming. A notable exception is the work of the New York Regents External Degree and the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, which is discussed later in this section of the report. With the emphasis on educational outcomes, the nontraditionalists have tended to focus on those things most easily measured with instruments and methods already present. Research is needed to identify the areas of educational achievement that are difficult to evaluate and to develop appropriate techniques for their assessment. What has developed that seems to work reasonably well is a patchwork effort using many of the existing procedures of the traditional institutions. These would include such measures as examinations, performance where appropriate, competencies, projects, and peer and/or professional reviews. The effectiveness of these efforts is substantiated by the FRACHE/COPA study that was conducted by Norman Burns.

The purpose of the Burns study was to experiment with institutional assessment in terms of outcomes through the institutional self-study. A guideline was developed that included a compendium of existing assessment resources. Six institutions representing a variety of institutional and educational characteristics joined with their respective regional accrediting associations to experiment with the assessment of institutions in terms of outcomes. While most proponents of outcome measurement call for a shift from a subjective judgment model to the objective judgment model, the Burns

study points out that the development of such scientific techniques of analysis have not been perfected to the point where objective measures can be substituted for the subjective measures currently used. What the study did explore and find useful in institutional evaluation was a combination of the two processes. Such a combination will broaden the base for judgments and perceptions about an institution's effectiveness in the area of student learning through systematic and more comprehensive procedures. The study proposed "an approach to institutional evaluation which would (1) emphasize broader measurement of outcomes, and (2) establish a clearer relationship between institutional purposes and the resources and processes employed by an institution in attempting to accomplish its purpose."[15]

## Accreditation Concerns about Nontraditional Education

In their research analysis for the project of the various levels of nontraditional education, Harris (certificate and undergraduate) and Dressel (graduate) have identified the major concerns and issues that are present in the current practice of accreditation of nontraditional education.

In the review of certificate and diploma programs, a variety of institutions was examined from among the technical institutes, community colleges, and vocational-technical schools participating in the study. Most of these programs can be characterized as occupational in nature, preparing individuals in a skill for employment or advancement in a particular vocation or career. Among some private trade and technical schools credits and credit accumulation are not emphasized; however,

their use is more prevalent among collegiate institutions. General education is not always required, and the academic calendar is usually open to a more frequent entry pattern. The most typical nontraditional delivery system used is individualized, self-paced, competency-based instruction. Concerns in the accreditation of such programs involved the number of part-time faculty used, the use of conventional accreditation standards, advertising practices, subletted or contracted educational programs, criteria for the awarding of credit, insufficient support services, and inadequate outcome measures. A more complete analysis of certificate programs is included in volume 2 of the reports on the project.

John Harris, in his review of the accreditation of nontraditional undergraduate education, made a thorough analysis of on-site reports and other relevant materials about the sample institutions in the study. His summary comments concerning his overall findings is rather enlightening:

> The most striking thing in reading these reports is how completely devoid they are of any apparent philosophical hesitancy about the varied manifestations of nontraditionality. In the minds of some, accreditation staffs and the administrators and faculty they call upon to form site teams are assumed to be rigid traditionalists reacting in "knee-jerk" against any deviation from the status quo. In fact, I believe any reader of these reports will conclude teams and staffs are generally enthusiastic about change and innovation. The only scolding that comes through in the site reports is where programs of institutions have not lived up to their stated nontraditional or innovative aims. In some cases, the evaluators also suggest that aims outdistance resources, but in these cases they do not indicate any basic disagreement with the aspirations themselves.

What then are the most critical concerns of accrediting agencies about nontraditional undergraduate education? Most of the issues are about general processes rather than the nontraditional aspects. These issues are concerned with:

1. Institutional and program organization, including governance and faculty;
2. Internal systems of control for a valid assurance of quality within programs and of the meaning of the degree awarded;
3. Non-campus-based forms of study, including external degrees, and off-campus operations, including military base instruction;
4. Contractual relationships with other institutions, agencies, or organizations for the delivery of education;
5. The accumulation of academic credits through nontraditional means such as the assessment of prior learning experience and experiential education; and
6. Adequate means for the assessment of student outcomes.

Though some problems may exist in these areas within nontraditional institutions and programs, on the whole the accrediting associations have been successful in applying the process model to the evaluation of nontraditional education for purposes of accreditation. John Harris has observed

> Another perspective is staffs and visiting teams did not indicate any difficulty in applying current or "traditional" accreditation policies, standards, or procedures to the wide spectrum of institutions and programs represented in this study. There were very few cases where either a visiting team or staff representative found a fundamental inconsistency between any given standard and an institutional practice.[16]

Interestingly enough, little that is conceptually new has been discovered in our review of the nontraditional educational institutions and programs in this study. As has been noted earlier in this report, most of what is considered nontraditional in the current movement is basically an innovation based on a former or current practice in American postsecondary education. Harris has noted this in his research report by the following observation:

> It is not a recent phenomenon that institutions have been seeking ways to credential students in the most direct ways possible. Urban universities with large evening programs for employed students and commuter community colleges in effect say that the benefits of collegiate education are possible without full-time study and residence on a campus. Correspondence courses suggest that with added diligence one can learn at home as well as in the classroom. Established, traditional universities have for years made considerable use of adjunct, part-time faculty. Study off-campus has not only been tolerated but encouraged. The value of intermingling work with study has been encouraged through cooperative education. Direct credentialling of competence is theoretically approved whenever a college allows students to receive credit for performance on examinations without attending class.[17]

The question may very well be asked, what then is nontraditional education? Harris's own answer to this question, based on his research in the project and his general knowledge of American postsecondary education may be correct, "It may be no more or less than a valence shift. That is, the nontraditional ventures of traditional institutions are minor variations on a major theme. It's when the minor variation becomes the dominant theme that the institution becomes nontraditional."[18]

A full report on the review of the accreditation of undergraduate nontraditional education is included in volume 2 of the reports on the project.

Paul Dressel conducted the research on the accreditation of nontraditional graduate education for the COPA project. His research activities include a thorough analysis of the institutions in the project that offer graduate-level programs, a review of the current literature on graduate education, and a survey of a sample of graduates from the various programs. Some assistance in this review was given by Sterling M. McMurrin, Lewis B. Mayhew, Wimberly C. Royster, Rudolph W. Schulze and Herbert Weisinger. Dressel's personal philosophy concerning a nontraditional graduate degree is stated in the preface to his research report where he asserts

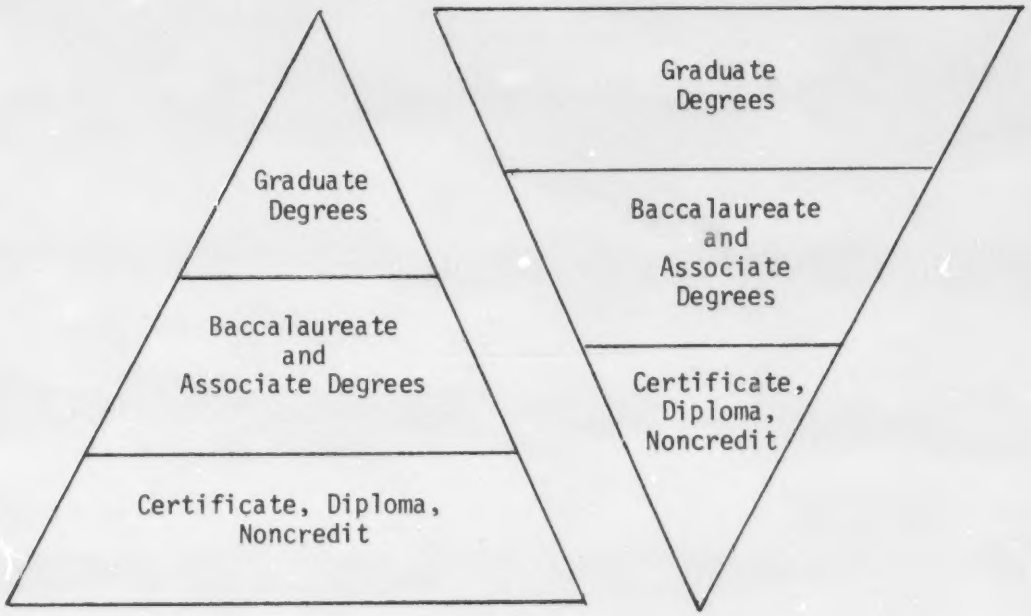
> For at least thirty years I have felt that there should be a route to a graduate degree apart from the credit accumulation and time serving now traditional on most university campuses....From long involvement with such rigidities, I have become a proponent for programs that offer degrees in nontraditional ways. I insist only that the degree be well defined, that standards are clear and enforced, and that nontraditional degrees avoid such traditional designations as the Ph.D. unless they can be fully justified as equivalents.[19]

Unlike what we have found in our research and review of certificate and undergraduate education, where major problems and concerns are few, nontraditional graduate education seems to be plagued with a number of serious and significant issues and problems. Early in the work of the project, the staff became aware of a more widespread national concern over graduate education, both traditional and nontraditional. Graphically, the concern over the different levels of education in the United States can be illustrated by two pyramids sitting side by side, one resting on its base and the other balancing on its point. If horizonally

divided into three parts, the pyramid sitting on its base represents the volume of institutions, programs, and students in postsecondary education; the other represents the intensity of concern about postsecondary education. (See Figure 4.) The area of postsecondary education with the largest volume of students and programs seems to have caused the least concern, while the area with the smallest number of students and programs (graduate) seems to have caused the greatest concern.

Figure 4

Proportion of and Concern about
Levels of Postsecondary Education in the U.S.




LEFT: Volume of U.S. postsecondary education institutions, programs, and students. RIGHT: Intensity of concern about postsecondary education.

For the purpose of the COPA project, Dressel has defined non-traditional graduate education as institutions or programs that are not dependent upon:

- traditional credit and class hour specifications,
- campus residency requirements,
- existence of a full-time faculty,
- ready availability of a library, counseling, or other learning resources
- rigidly defined requirements.

They are more likely to be characterized by:

- flexibility and individualization in programs,
- convenience to students in location and scheduling of courses,
- use of adjunct, temporary faculty members,
- special attention and relevance to mature individuals, particularly full-time employed adults.

In reviewing the various forms for the delivery of nontraditional graduate education, Dressel has identified four basic patterns:

1. Institutions offering at various off-campus sites degrees essentially identical to those offered on campus.

2. Institutions offering at various off-campus sites degree programs especially developed for an off-campus, employed clientele.

3. Business, industrial, or research enterprises offering a degree program (through an in-house institute, center, or other unit) primarily for persons employed by the enterprise.

4. Free-standing institutes, colleges, or universities lacking campuses, full-time faculties (at least in traditional terms), and other traditional university attributes.

In developing this classification system and the various patterns of nontraditional graduate study, Dressel has identified the problems and concerns unique to each:

> These four patterns pose somewhat different problems for study. The first type, being a traditional institution, offers an on-campus traditional program

> at a distance (perhaps in a slightly modified form), but controls the character and quality of the program by developing curricula and evaluation materials, by selecting teachers, and by monitoring the selection and performance of both teachers and students.
>
> The second pattern poses more difficult problems, especially when the extended program becomes very large relative to the home campus or involves programs in which the home faculty lacks either extensive experience or excellence. In this circumstance, the materials and policies cannot be effectively monitored by the campus faculty. Program quality and character depend heavily on administrators and a few associates and on the selection and coordination of adjunct faculty. The latter task is never ending and time consuming. It is also expensive if done well.
>
> The third pattern can involve the disadvantages or advantages of any of the others, but introduces an additional element--the extent to which the program may be so dominated by corporation interests that academic freedom is destroyed, faculty role in formulation and enforcing policy may be abridged, and program continuance and quality may depend more on corporation needs than on sound educational principles.
>
> Finally, the fourth pattern presents the most difficult problem to evaluate because there is really nothing much to observe except as some degree candidates meet as a group for brief periods. There are no resources, no processes, and no permanent faculty to be seen or heard.[20]

The major concern over nontraditional graduate education in the United States seems to stem primarily from the issue of maintenance and improvement of quality in the programs offered. We are well aware of the complex issues surrounding the operational aspects of off-campus and satellite centers for the delivery of graduate programs; however, we must reassert that the major issue for accreditation is and should be over the qualitative factors concerning the nature, structure, content, and outcomes of graduate education regardless of the method and characteristics of the delivery system, traditional or nontraditional. This position by the accrediting agencies is in keeping with the Council

of Graduate Schools-COPA joint statement issued in May 1978 about the purposes and functions of graduate education. The purposes and functions specified in the statement are:

1. The advanced education and intellectual development of able and motivated individuals in a variety of forms and disciplines essential to the pursuit of specific careers.
2. The production of new knowledge through research and intellectual inquiry and/or the application of knowledge toward the solution of technological, social, economic, and political problems and issues.
3. The presentation and transmission of knowledge and the extension of our cultural heritage to successive generations.

In the evaluation of nontraditional graduate education for accreditation purposes, Dressel has identified a number of major concerns. Briefly summarized, these are:

1. Graduate programs that degenerate into a mere accumulation of credits, which result in a degree lacking in cumulative impact and rigor.
2. An accredited college or university with limited or no experience in on-campus graduate education that begins to offer it at a distance.
3. The offering of graduate degrees by a large organization or research enterprise, independent of a university, that may be narrow in scope and lack permanence. Even though the program may be excellent because of the quality of the available resources, such operations pose unique problems

for accrediting associations in areas such as administration, faculty participation in governance, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy.

4. Nontraditional degree programs that have developed around a cultish or deviant faction of an established discipline or a totally new, socially oriented segment of a society that does not place a significant emphasis on the basic tenets of graduate education.
5. Free-standing nontraditional graduate institutions that award degrees based almost entirely on the submission of an individual's outcomes (project, dissertation, or performance). These programs are the most difficult to evaluate for purposes of accreditation.

These concerns are more fully stated and discussed by Dressel in his research report on nontraditional graduate education contained in volume 2 of the reports of the COPA project.

Dressel has come to the conclusion--which is a major finding of this project--that it would be far more ethical and responsible on the part of educational institutions of all types and at all levels to define their programs in terms of a set of competencies and insist that students demonstrate the attainment of these competencies in order to acquire whatever credential the program offers. "Ultimately, the attainment of a number of competencies at specified levels might result in a degree or other designation," says Dressel. Dressel further notes:

> Neither the character nor quality of the final product for any of the doctorates has been authoritatively prescribed and enforced. Thus, evaluation of a program

> or degree quality by appraisal of the quality of the culminating task is difficult. Nevertheless, the appraisal of outcome quality is a more promising and more appropriate procedure for nontraditional programs than a focus on program requirements and processes. An application of the same emphasis to traditional programs is then necessary and highly desirable.[21]

Also as a part of his work for the COPA project, Paul Dressel has prepared a report on "Problems and Principles in the Recognition and Accreditation of Graduate Education." In this report, Dressel proposes guidelines for the development and review of all graduate education, traditional and nontraditional, guidelines that identify essential characteristics and components for graduate degrees, and principles and criteria for their evaluation for accreditation purposes. The full report is included in the reports of the project as volume 3.

It is important to note that the basic findings of both Harris and Dressel are consistent, though their research was carried out independently and in different areas. Their findings show that there is considerably more concern within the postsecondary education community and the public about nontraditional graduate education than about undergraduate or certificate and diploma education. Where there are concerns, these relate primarily to quality assurance and ethical practice issues in such areas as individualized degree programs, free-standing institutions, corporate- and/or business-based degrees, cultish and/or socially defined study areas unaccepted by established disciplines, acceptable institutional and/or interinstitutional relationships and practices, use of part-time faculty, and inadequately developed systems for the assessment of educational outcomes. These findings are more fully discussed in the research papers themselves. Also, they are verified by the results of the national survey.

In the survey for the project we found several interesting and divergent opinions concerning perceptions of the accreditation of nontraditional education. Eighty percent of the respondents thought that nontraditional education has been treated fairly by the accrediting associations; however, 86 percent thought that nontraditional education presents a basic problem to the accrediting community. Further, when asked if a new national accrediting agency should be created to deal specifically with nontraditional institutions, only 13 percent agreed that this should be done. While the data cited provides a general base of support for the accrediting associations in the evaluation and accreditation of nontraditional education, it also reflects a pervasive uneasiness among the 1,500 educators who participated in the survey concerning the accreditation of nontraditional education.

Specific information was presented in the survey on the work of the visiting committees from accrediting associations in the evaluation of nontraditional education. Allowing for the difficulty respondents may have had in generalizing a variety of experiences in response to a set of specific questions, the volume of the data is still sufficient to have some validity in the insights it reflects. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents thought the purpose of the visit was clear to the visiting team and to the institution. The accrediting commission staffs provided appropriate assistance to the institution, according to 85 percent. Eighty-one percent felt that the written reports and documents prepared by the institution were adequate. Responses indicated that major problems exist about the criteria to be used for the evaluation and about the proper orientation of the visiting team to the nontraditional

nature of the institution or program before the on-site visit. Thirty-eight percent felt that the criteria for the evaluation of the nontraditional institution or program were unclear to both the institution and the visiting team, and 36 percent felt that the team was not adequately oriented.

It was the opinion of the respondents that the on-site visitors to nontraditional educational ventures were most concerned (as ranked below) about the following areas:

1. Institutional processes

   1st--Purpose and goals
   2nd--Degree requirements
   3rd--Faculty and teaching
   4th--Institutional resources
   5th--Finance

2. Quality Assurance

   1st--Comparability of degree expectations
   2nd--Comparability of student achievements
   3rd--Consistency of procedures used to evaluate student achievement against purpose and goal
   4th--General intellectual ability and interest of students
   5th--Provision of instruction, courses, or degrees through a contractual relationship with another institution or unaccredited agency

3. Faculty Matters

   1st--Educational attainment
   2nd--Use of adjunct, part-time faculty
   3rd--Relevant experience of faculty
   4th--Independence of faculty judgments on educational attainments of students from managerial concerns
   5th--Academic leadership

When asked to select and rank from a preset list of a variety of nontraditional educational modes those that were perceived as most

threatening to quality education, the following were selected:

1st--An institution or agency created by the federal government to award credit or to instruct.
2nd--A private, free-standing institution founded for the sole purpose of offering unconventional degree programs.
3rd--An institution or agency created by a private corporate body to award credit or instruct.
4th--Special institutions created by a state system of higher education to offer external degrees.
5th--Courses and/or degrees offered by an accredited institution through a contractual relationship with another institution or an unaccredited agency.

The following options were selected and ranked as those that hold the most promise for improving access to groups perceived not to have had adequate access to American higher education.

1st--External degree programs offering off-campus, independent study through instructional systems, programs, and materials designed for home study.
2nd--External degrees granted on the basis of examined achievement without regard to required periods of study or residency.
3rd--Off-campus, conventional institutions.
4th--Educational brokering efforts that offer no instruction or credit but which link learners' interests and needs to educational resources such as instruction, assessment of prior learning, and counseling.
5th--Competency-based curricula within conventional institutions.

Finally, the participants in the survey were asked, based on their experience or observations of accrediting association actions on nontraditional education (institutions and programs), to indicate whether they thought the decisions made were fair, questionable, or unfair. Eighty-three percent thought they were fair, 16 percent thought they were questionable, and only 1 percent thought that the decisions were unfair.

We are sure that all who read this report will not agree fully with these observations concerning the status of accreditation of

nontraditional education. However, when the evolutionary state of the nontraditional education movement is taken into consideration, the propensity of accreditation appears to have been toward the nontraditionalist. And all things considered, the propensity of American postsecondary education, including its system of accreditation, is toward the expansion of access to postsecondary education of quality through viable unconventional and alternative means, with a valence shift from process concerns to appropriately defined, assessable, educational outcomes.

## Comments and Observations on Related Matters

Other factors in the nontraditional education movement have created concerns that should be addressed in more detail in this report. Some are not exclusively under the purview of accreditation. These are credit for experiential and prior learning, off-campus educational operations, contractual relationships, continuing education and lifelong learning, the meaning of degrees and other educational credentials, relationships to state and federal agencies, and financial responsibilities and costs for accreditation. While most of these matters have existed in some form for some time, the practical and emotional issues surrounding them have been greatly intensified within the postsecondary education community and other segments of American society in recent years by the nontraditional education movement. Each of these factors has been addressed to some extent in the COPA project.

Awarding college credit for experiential and prior learning is a practice in postsecondary education that is both praised and criticized, but is nontheless accepted by most as a significant element in the current

nontraditional education movement. While much work has been done in this area by the New York Regents, the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) is currently the major protagonist for the awarding of credit based on the assessment of experiential learning and has done the most important work in developing reliable procedures for validating the quality of such learning. As defined by CAEL, "Experiential learning is the knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and skills one acquires in a given experience, a cluster of related experiences, or in the totality of one's experience."[22] In the CAEL Principles of Good Practice in Assessing Experiential Learning, Warren M. Willingham notes:

> CAEL has devoted rigorous attention to the assessment of two large classes of learning: that which is sponsored by the institution and typically off-campus, and that which is not sponsored by the institution and typically occurs prior to enrollment. There are numerous varieties of sponsored learning including internships, cooperative work study, field experience, study abroad, community service, and so on. The variety of prior learning is even more diverse and may include virtually any type of college-level learning that is relevant to the degree objective of the student and the mission of the institution.[23]

CAEL identifies three functions basic to the assessment of experiential learning: the certifying function, the educative function, and the evaluative function. In addressing its work, CAEL has asserted that there are also three essential obligations for institutions in assessing and crediting experiential learning:

1. To develop a sensible rationale for the experiential learning that is consistent with the institution's mission, reasonable in relation to its resources, and useful to its intended clientele;

2. To translate that rationale into workable policies, guidelines, and operating procedures that are made clearly known to all students and interested parties; and

3. To insure that those policies, guidelines, and procedures are followed with reasonable fairness and consistency and useful outcomes.[24]

It is important for educators who may question the validity of credit for experiential learning to know that the principles and practices proposed by CAEL are not very different from those already existing in educational literature and theory concerning good practice in classroom teaching, testing, grading, and educational measurement. Actually, what CAEL proposes is an adaptation and application of existing assessment practices to the unique circumstances and problems posed by experiential learning in post-secondary education. CAEL has recently set up a Commission on Accreditation to work cooperatively with accrediting associations in their evaluation of experiential education. This joint venture should be useful to institutions and accrediting teams in reviewing such programs effectively when an institution is undergoing evaluation for accreditation purposes.

The credit-by-examination program developed by the New York Regents in 1960 provided the base for the first "examining university" in the United States, the New York Regents External Degree. This program includes approximately sixty examination programs in the arts and sciences, education, business, criminal justice, and nursing and also includes a "special assessment" component for the evaluation of students who may have acquired knowledge in subjects for which there are no appropriate standardized examinations.

The rationale for the inclusion of this information in this section of the report is because of the basic philosophical-theoretical aspects concerning the validity of such a practice. The rightness or wrongness

of the practice is a matter for the educators themselves--administrators and faculty--to decide. Once the practice is determined to be acceptable, then the role of accreditation is to see that the standards for good practice are established and met by the accredited institutions involved.

Based on the research and review of the COPA project, it is our opinion that the concept of crediting experiential learning in post-secondary education is sound. Furthermore, we think the principles and guidelines developed by CAEL, if properly implemented by institutions, provide the bases for quality assurance in the awarding of credit for experiential learning. Where abuses are found, it is because good practices have not been applied and standards have not been set or followed by the institutions concerned. The potential damage to the individual student who may receive an inappropriate or inaccurate evaluation of prior learning should be the greatest cause for concern. The COPA study has not found any major resistence to the concept of experiential education even through the respondents to the national survey did rank experiential learning (credit for on-the-job or life experience) first as the cause for greatest concern with regard to the awarding of credit for prior learning. The survey rankings of the four options given of causes for concern were as follows:

1st--Credit for on-the-job or life experience.
2nd--Credit for military courses
3rd--Credit for performances on examinations developed by the institution.
4th--Credit for performance on CLEP or other standardized achievement tests.

One of the more emotional issues to surface in the nontraditional movement concerns off-campus degrees and programs. Unrest over off-campus

activities came to a head in October 1976 when the Council on Post-secondary Accreditation, responding to pressures from a number of institutional organizations and government agencies, issued a policy statement on the issue. The statement acknowledged the legitimacy of such learning opportunities, noting that "In recent years, however, the number, size, and variety of such educational activities have grown rapidly" based on encouragement by state and federal funding programs and the nontraditional movement to reach out and serve new student clienteles. Concern was not for the fact that such was happening, but rather for a perceived lack of quality in some of the off-campus programs. Among the problems identified by COPA were the following:

- Institutions with little or no experience in running off-campus degree programs have plunged into such operations.
- In response to demands, institutions have sponsored programs off campus for which they have no counterparts on campus.
- Institutions in some instances have formalized a differential standard of quality by labeling credits earned off-campus as being not acceptable on campus.
- Institutions have offered off-campus programs that require little or no involvement or oversight by on-campus faculty. In some instances, responsibility for the operationally separate units has been contracted out.
- Institutions have established satellite operations far removed from the parent campus, often crossing state and even regional boundaries.
- Off-campus offerings have ranged from large, relatively permanent educational units to short-term ventures consisting of one course, one faculty member hired locally, and a handful of students.[25]

The COPA statement concluded with a request to the accrediting bodies to deal quickly and effectively with the off-campus issues by applying existing procedures to all educational programs of an accredited institution regardless of location, to develop new procedures if necessary, and to develop appropriate procedures for dealing with institutions operating interregionally.

The various regional accrediting commissions for postsecondary education responded to the COPA statement quickly by reviewing their policies and procedures to see if they were adequate and if they were being applied uniformly. At the time of this report all commissions have responded in some form giving adequate assurance that off-campus operations of accredited institutions are being evaluated. This review and subsequent action as appropriate by the various regional associations evolved from a "Memorandum of Agreement" reached by the executive staff of the commissions, which included the following statement of principle:

> The nature and scope of an educational institution are defined in its legal charter and informal statements of purpose and mission prepared by the institution.
>
> The accreditation of an institution is in part an affirmation that the institution has established conditions and procedures under which its purposes can be realized and appears in fact to be accomplishing those purposes.
>
> Off-campus educational activities initiated subsequent to the most recent evaluation are not automatically included in the institution's accreditation. Offering educational programs at new locations often in fact alters the purposes and procedures of institutions and the nature of the constituencies it seeks to serve. Change in institutional purposes, in the nature of the potential student body to be served, and/or in the activities undertaken to accomplish these purposes affect the validity of an institution's accreditation and thus may necessitate its review.

For institutions operating off-campus programs outside the geographical

region in which they are accredited, the regional commissions have developed cooperative, sequential evaluations such as that of the North Central Association cited earlier in this report and described in detail in Appendix A. The cooperative and/or sequential evaluation model appears to be an effective process for the evaluation of interregional as well as intraregional operations of accredited postsecondary educational institutions.

One aspect of the off-campus issue that has generated unusual concern is the jurisdictional-territorial problem. As has been mentioned earlier in this report, there are those who wish to assign to accreditation the responsibility of boundary maintenance for institutions against intruders with off-campus programs. This is not, however, an issue rightly or appropriately within the jurisdiction of regional accreditation. It is a matter of concern to all, but jurisdictionally it is the prerogative of the individual institution and its governing body to determine the geographical scope of an institution, working within the framework of state approval and licensing authorities. Accreditation decisions concerning institutional operations regardless of geographical location, can only rightfully be made in terms of the quality factors of the programs offered. It is the responsibility of the accrediting commissions to see that accredited institutions with off-campus operations have developed, implemented, and maintain an adequate system of quality assurance for all such programs.

Another type of off-campus operation that has generated a great deal of concern is postsecondary education offered by accredited institutions on military installations. Because of the scope of these operations and the complex nature of the situation, a separate study

of postsecondary education on military bases has developed out of the COPA project for implementation in late 1978. This study will involve a case-study approach for the evaluation of all postsecondary educational programs offered on ten military installations selected from across the United States and overseas. Supported by a $60,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense, the study will be conducted by COPA and the six regional accrediting associations with results to be released in 1979.

In their move to develop new educational programs for new student markets quickly, many institutions have sought assistance from outside sources for a variety of services. The establishment of contractual relationships with other institutions and nonaccredited organizations or agencies in the implementation of nontraditional degree programs and courses has given rise to one of the more controversial issues of the movement. In 1973 FRACHE developed and issued a policy statement with interim guidelines for contractual relationships aimed at curbing the improper use of an institution's accredited status in such arrangements. This policy required that the primary purpose of the courses or programs involved must be educational and must be consistent with the purpose and objectives of the accredited institution. In addition, all courses to be offered and credits to be earned must be subject to the academic purposes of an remain under the sole and direct control of the accredited institution.

The most problems seem to emanate from the contracting organization or agency which offers a variety of configurations of services ranging from total prepackaged programs (i.e., market research, curriculum,

course materials, faculty, evaluation, and recruitment) to procurement of a single service, or any combination of functions associated with the development of nontraditional education not fully controlled by the sponsoring institution. The least concern seems to be with the educational brokering organization that embodies a number of activities designed primarily to bring together nontraditional students and institutions (i.e., an organization that has no courses or programs or faculty and offers no degrees).

It is recognized that an institution may have a real need to acquire experienced assistance in developing and implementing new programs of an unconventional nature. However, there is a basic question of propriety when an accredited institution contracts for the delivery and award of its degrees through an outside agency or organization. There is much support from a variety of sources for the "imprinting" function of postsecondary educational institutions on their students that goes well beyond the acquiring of skills, the accumulation of credits, and the awarding of degrees. Such a function is directly related to an institution's commitment to its students in the achievement of its purpose and educational objectives. The question of propriety is compounded if the contractor is an entrepreneur seeking legitimization through an indirect use of an institution's name, degrees, and accreditation. The institution has a basic responsibility to its constituents to insure that the programs and degrees it offers are academically sound and appropriately identified and, when completed, are representative of the institution's purpose and philosophy of education. The

accrediting association has the responsibility to its members and the public to insure that the authority of its accreditation is not misused to authenticate courses, programs, or degrees offered under contract with organizations or agencies not so accredited.

The nontraditional movement at the postsecondary education level has had a serendipitous effect in at least two areas--a renewed emphasis on continuing education and a formalization of the concept of lifelong learning. The two are not unrelated, and both are interrelated with nontraditional education in many respects.

Continuing education is generally recognized as learning activities that individuals engage in after their formal education is over, for personal enrichment, professional improvement, or both. For years a large number of postsecondary educational institutions have enrolled millions of individuals in evening classes, short courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, institutes, and other forms of continuing education, either for credit or noncredit. Today many of the nontraditional programs are managed and delivered through the continuing education divisions of institutions.

The prevalent concept of lifelong learning is the process by which individuals continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes over their lifetime.[26] The interpretation of lifelong learning is rather broad in nature and includes continuing education as one of several activities or programs through which learning opportunities occur.

In the COPA project, we have researched the various standards, policies, and procedures of all of the COPA-recognized accrediting

associations to see what provisions have been made for quality assurance in areas of continuing education and lifelong learning. The research revealed that most of the associations have acknowledged or recognized these functions as a legitimate activity of the institutions, but few have developed specific standards or policies to incorporate continuing education and lifelong learning activities into the evaluation process for purposes of accreditation. Notable exceptions are the Southern, Western, and Northwest regional associations, which have specific standards and/or policies for continuing education. Each of these also recognizes the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) as a means for formally acknowledging the noncredit educational accomplishments of individuals.

Accurate use of the CEU can also have a qualitative effect on the program development of noncredit continuing education in the lifelong learning process. Many postsecondary educational institutions, though active for years in extension and continuing education programs, have not rushed to develop and implement lifelong learning programs per se. With the passage of the Lifelong Learning Act in October 1976 and as federal funds become available for such activities, the goals and objectives of the lifelong learning movement and the role for post-secondary educational institutions will become clear. As this area of postsecondary education is more sharply focused, the accrediting agencies will need to be sure that their evaluation procedures include this function in the process of institutional and program accreditation. As a forecast of the future, participants in the national survey selected noncredit continuing education as the second most viable

program expansion option for traditional institutions in the 1980s.

Throughout the work of the COPA project, concern has been expressed about the "meaning" of degrees. In attempting to identify problems in meaning, it became apparent that there are two basic situations that cause concern. One situation is the nontraditional institution or program that is unconventional in every respect (objectives, structure, curriculum, delivery system, faculty, credit accumulation options, and educational outcomes), but awards a traditional degree, which by nature and historical precedent conveys certain meanings not present in the usage in question. The other problem occurs when there is an absence of those elements normally expected in the content and structure of degree programs. John Harris and Paul Dressel discuss both of these problems in more detail in their respective research reports for the project (see volumes 2 and 3).

These problems are not exclusively those of the nontraditionalist; they are present throughout all of American postsecondary education. They were thoroughly addressed by Stephen H. Spurr in his report on Academic Degree Structures for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and by Paul Dressel in College and University Curriculum. Spurr said:

> Academic degrees are not important in themselves, but they do serve to characterize simply and directly an academic program in terms of generally accepted admission standards, curriculum, duration of efforts, and level of accomplishment....The name of the degree is relatively unimportant as long as it has an accepted interpretation.[27]

If a degree is to mean more than the fulfillment of course requirements and credit accumulation, then as Dressel noted, the total curriculum

should be designed to provide for continuity, sequence, and integration in the educational experience with a breadth and depth appropriate for the level and type of credential to be earned.

The latest and most comprehensive review of educational credentials and degrees is the work of the Task Force on Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education cited in the Introduction of this report. Directly addressing the growing concern about the meaning and value of degrees, their report states:

> A credential designated as a "degree" has been the primary device used by colleges and universities to recognize learning of the depth, breadth, and rigor associated with college study. The meaning of the undergraduate degree should be protected to preserve its legitimacy as an accolade for educational accomplishment at higher and broader levels of learning.[28]

It then includes this recommendation:

> Each credential-granting institution should clearly define, to the extent possible, the meaning of the certificates and degrees it awards.[29]

The task force report also cautions against improper use of the terms "arts" and "science" resulting in a loss of clarity in the generally accepted meanings for these terms in connection with degrees.

The consistency with which the problem of meaning has surfaced in this study and those by Spurr, Dressel, and the American Council on Education points to a call for action by American postsecondary education institutions to bring clarity and consistency to the use and meaning of educational degrees and credentials. The role for accreditation was clearly indicated in the national survey for the project when respondents selected and ranked second as a function for accreditation assurance that "respective degrees represent certain minimal

attainments as a critical function for voluntary accreditation."

The proliferation of new degrees is also a concern that has been stimulated by the nontraditional education movement. The sentiment discovered in the research of the project seems to indicate a discouragement for the creation of additional degree nomenclatures and an encouragement for structuring degree programs within the framework of established credentials and degrees.

The various state and federal government agencies have significant roles to play in postsecondary education. In addition to funding considerations at both levels, the individual states have the unique function of legally authorizing (chartering, licensing, registering) an institution to operate within a state. Both state and federal authorities have the responsibility to assure the proper use of public funds in the educational endeavor. While the consumer protection responsibility of the states includes the educational enterprise, there are additional, more complex issues involved, such as exempting certain institutions from certain procedures, setting minimum criteria or standards, evaluation procedures, off-campus activities of in-state as well as out-of-state institutions, and state funding for private nonprofit and proprietary institutions. A significant issue has developed between the states and the nongovernmental accrediting community over the boundary maintenance problem created by the nontraditional movement, which has been discussed earlier in this report. The jurisdictional issue is an important matter; however, it is not an issue for the accrediting associations except where matters of

institutional quality are of concern. There is also an important issue between the states and accrediting associations about unnecessary duplication of effort. In some states the recognition process has taken on the accouterments of accreditation. A few states defend their actions by charging that accreditation standards are at such a minimal level they do not satisfy the requirements of the state. While there may be an occasional situation involving an individual institution that can be used to illustrate this charge, there is substantial evidence that the reverse is true. For example, a significant number of institutions recognized or licensed to operate by states have consistently over time been unable to meet standards of accreditation. A double system of accreditation is an unwarranted expense to the taxpayer and an unfair, unnecessary duplication of effort for the institutions concerned. The states and the nongovernmental accrediting community need to seek ways to coordinate their efforts to fulfill their respective roles in a complementary way which will best serve the American postsecondary educational institution.

Most federal agency concerns over the legitimacy and quality of postsecondary education could probably be satisfied through a joint effort on the part of the states and voluntary accreditation.

In his 1975 study for COPA of the "Respective Roles of Federal Government, State Governments, and Private Accrediting Agencies in the Governance of Postsecondary Education," William A. Kaplin concluded that each member of the triad will continue to be significantly involved in governance of postsecondary education for the foreseeable future and that the immediate goals should be: "increased understanding

of each element's capabilities; sharper emphasis on each element's strong points; clearer definition of each element's functions; and better division, coordination, and interrelationship of functions."[30]

Those involved in the development of nontraditional educational programs and institutions need to be realistic about the costs involved of evaluations for accreditation purposes. While some educators have expressed concern about these costs, we have not found evidence in the course of the project of unreasonable or unnecessary costs associated with the evaluation process for nontraditional education. Actually, the indirect costs to accrediting agencies in working with nontraditional institutions and programs have usually far exceeded the reimbursements received. The accrediting associations, of course, have the responsibility to assure that their costs are fair and reasonable. The institutions must also include in their research and development budgets for new programs the necessary costs related to the review and evaluation of their institution or programs for purposes of accreditation. Recognizing the importance and value of quality control to their operational effectiveness, business and industry routinely allocate resources for that purpose. The adequacy of institutional resources to begin a new nontraditional endeavor must be questioned if there is concern about evaluation costs.

# CHAPTER 3

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Nontraditional education is a constructive, needed reform in American postsecondary education. Difficulties arising from nontraditional education result not from the basic concept of alternative approaches to education but the manner in which the innovations are implemented. Many conventional institutions are developing "innovative or nontraditional" programs for adults to compensate for the decline in the 18-21 year old student enrollments--without proper institutional or faculty commitment to alternative approaches to education and without adequate instructional resources and support services.

Innovative programs raise basic academic questions concerning the purposes of higher education, expected outcomes for degree programs, the meaning of quality in postsecondary education, and the adequacy of current approaches to accreditation. These questions apply to conventional programs as well as the nontraditional ones.

There should not be two sets of accreditation standards--one based on input measures for conventional programs and another, more rigorous output-oriented set for nontraditional programs. A common set of accreditation guidelines should be developed and should apply to both conventional and unconventional programs.

Accrediting agencies and academic institutions should cease the debate concerning whether traditional programs are "better" than nontraditional ones or vice versa and strive to develop quality educational programs that respond to individuals' needs--realizing that traditional and nontraditional programs are not mutually exclusive and the best programs for many students are a blend of the two. The individual seeking the educational services will choose the approach--traditional or nontraditional--which is best suited for his or her needs and learning style. Therefore, these approaches are alternatives, as seen from the perspective of the student. Perhaps this should also be considered in the present study of nontraditional approaches.

Statement by
Reatha C. King, President
Metropolitan State University

In the COPA Project on Nontraditional Education we are grateful to Reatha C. King, president of one of the institutions participating in the study, for the preceding statement, which parallels with great insight the major findings of the project. President King's statement, voluntarily submitted in response to the national survey, provides a framework for this section of the report.

> Nontraditional education is a constructive, needed reform in American postsecondary education.

For the past three decades, many educators, as well as those not professionally in education, have called for reform in American postsecondary education. Some have been protagonists for curricula reform (general education and vocational-occupational education vs. liberal education); others have called for equal access for all citizens regardless of prior educational achievements (egalitarianism vs. elitism); many have questioned the historical purposes of a college education (an intellectual pursuit of knowledge to become a cultured human being vs. highly specialized, narrowly defined skills or competencies that are salable); and there are those who have called for--in some cases demanded--radical change in the modus operandi (on-campus residency for preset curricula vs. remote or noncampus, individualized delivery of education); and, finally, there are the nontraditionalists who are evangelical protagonists in varying degrees for all of these and other issues relevant to reform in postsecondary education.

As we have noted in earlier sections of this report, it is our belief--based on the activities of this project--that the nontraditional

education movement when qualitatively implemented is good and has been a positive and creative force in postsecondary education. It is not only a "constructive, needed reform," it has the potential to serve as a catalytic force for reform of all of American postsecondary education. Lewis B. Mayhew in Legacy of the Seventies presents a valuable overview of the origin, history, and nature of the "revolutionary innovations and radical changes" in American higher education since the late 1960s and identifies the "generalized spirit of educational reform that grew up during the 1960s in orthodox institutions"[31] as the most important influence on the emergence of the nontraditional movement. Mayhew presents a thesis that in 1968, American higher education entered an era of radical change in many ways and that if these changes persist, higher education will become significantly different from what it was before. Most of these changes are found in the various forms of nontraditional education. Mayhew cautions that though the movement is ten years old and has had significant impact on postsecondary education, it is still too soon to judge if it will live or die.

> Whether the nontraditional movement will follow the trajectory of the general education movement--rapid rise, brief stabilization, and equally rapid decline--cannot be known. Given the nature of movements in education, the odds are it will. But it might last, and higher education would then become dramatically different from what it has been in the past.[32] (Emphasis added.)

The specific characteristics and nature of the reform called for in postsecondary education is unclear. Educators, scholars, students, politicians, business leaders, and citizens--each group has its own set of ideas. There does seem to be a general consensus among these

groups, with varying interpretations, on the issues of equality of access, quality of results, and individual achievements. The nontraditional movement encompasses all of these issues, and much of the reform it has engendered has been in these areas.

> Difficulties arising from nontraditional education result not from the basic concept of alternative approaches to education but the manner in which the innovations are implemented.

As has been previously noted in this report, the COPA project has found no significant opposition to the concept of nontraditional education. The review of nontraditional institutions and programs for purposes of accreditation did not reveal basic resistance to the movement. Where problems were found they were usually related to implementation processes and procedures. The national survey revealed strong support for the concept of nontraditional education by 94.5 percent of the 1,500 respondents.

Regardless of the reasons for support of the concept of nontraditional education, and there are many, it is significant that there appears to be broad-based agreement that the concept is good. It is also significant to note that where difficulties or problems exist it is because of inadequately developed procedures. This finding directly relates to the weaknesses identified earlier in chapter 2. It is essential that the nontraditionalists do all that is necessary to assure the programs developed are of quality. Unquestionable quality of programs offered will do more than anything else to allay fears, misconceptions, and resistance where they may exist.

> Many conventional institutions are developing "innovative or nontraditional" programs for adults to compensate for the decline in the 18-21 year old student enrollments--without proper institutional or faculty commitment to alternative approaches to education and without adequate instructional resources and support services.

This segment of President King's statement touches on several important aspects of the nontraditional movement that are related to the findings of the COPA project. First, the adaptation of many of the characteristics and structures of the nontraditional movement by the conventional institution in order to serve the adult student better has taken place. While it is all but impossible to determine accurately the number of traditional institutions that have developed alternative, nontraditional approaches to postsecondary education, the data from the national survey of the project is at least enlightening. Of the 1,062 administrators who participated in the survey, 829 or 78 percent indicated that their institutions offered nontraditional programs. The volume of nontraditional programs offered by these institutions was significant and was reported as follows:

| Number of Institutions | Percent of Institution's Total Educational Program That Is Nontraditional |
|---|---|
| 614 | 10 |
| 141 | 25 |
| 40 | 50 |
| 13 | 75 |
| 21 | 100 |
| 829 | |

The second observation addresses the motives behind the move of traditional institutions into alternative forms of education. While a

declining market of 18- to 21-year-olds, financial exigencies, and excess faculty are motivating factors for some institutions, it should be noted that many of the institutions are currently offering nontraditional education because of a strong institution commitment to public service. Not since the influx of older students on the GI Bill after World War II have traditional institutions exhibited such interest in serving the adult student. However, the significant point to be made is the need for a clear institutional commitment to serve the nontraditional student in appropriate ways with alternative forms of education of quality. Such a commitment includes an appropriate institutional purpose, consensus of constituent groups--governing board, faculty, students, sponsoring organization--and adequate resource allocation. A problem of the nontraditional movement has been the quick expansion of well intended institutions into such programs without fully developing programs and procedures, and without sufficient personnel adequately versed in the unconventional methods and modes to be used. A significant problem has developed in this area because of the entrepreneurial individual or organization usually external to the institution who has taken advantage of the movement to "sell" cosmetic procedures for developing, packaging, implementing, assessing, and evaluating nontraditional education.

> Innovative programs raise basic academic questions concerning the purposes of higher education, expected outcomes for degree programs, the meaning of quality in postsecondary education, and the adequacy of current approaches to accreditation. These questions apply to conventional programs as well as the nontraditional ones.

Who is to decide the purposes of American postsecondary education? There is no simple division of opinion among groups rightly concerned with the issue--the opinions and groups are many and complex.

Education has long been defined and understood to be the process by which an individual is developed as a person by the fostering, to varying degrees, of growth or expansion of knowledge, wisdom, desirable qualities of mind and character, physical health, and general competency, usually through a formal course of study and instruction (a variation on unabridged Webster, 3rd edition). Nontraditional education implies a departure, deviation, or variation from that which has become the tradition in education. What then is the best description for nontraditional postsecondary education in the United States today? Is it a departure from process, or a variation of process? Is it a departure from the goals and objectives for education, or a variation of those goals and objectives? Is it a departure from the expected outcomes of an education, or is it a variation of the expected outcomes of an education?

The answers to these questions have significance in understanding the current nontraditional education movement. If it is viewed as a departure from the basic purposes of education, then we have a dichotomy developing in American postsecondary education. If it is viewed as a variation of the basic purposes of postsecondary education, then we have an entirely different situation. The findings of this project support the view that nontraditional education is basically a variation of the traditional processes, purposes, and outcomes of postsecondary education. This view does not force a separation of nontraditional educational ventures from traditional. Rather, it encourages a

unification within a framework conducive to reform of the basic processes, purposes, and expected outcomes for all of postsecondary education. In the nontraditional education movement, there is a shift of valence or emphasis in the essential elements--process, purpose, outcomes--which has the potential to influence all of postsecondary education.

Accrediting associations must also make a valence or emphasis shift from the current process model, discussed earlier, to include assessment of educational outcomes as a major emphasis in the evaluation of post-secondary education for purposes of accreditation.

In the national survey educators were asked, "What do you think the response of traditional institutions will be as they face the decline of the 18 to 24 year old population in the 1980s and the emergence of non-traditional higher education, particularly that part focused on older part-time students?" From a preset list of options the items were selected and ranked as follows:

1st--Develop more non-residential programs
2nd--Offer more non-credit continuing education programs
3rd--Recognize more experiential programs
4th--Assure quality through exit graduation standards rather than admission standards
5th--Use adjunct, temporary faculty more often
6th--Make greater use of multi-media instructional procedures for independent remote study
7th--Move to state degree requirements in terms of student performances and products
8th--Reassert the value of traditional, full-time campus based study
9th--Reassert selective admission standards.

It is significant to note that the items selected most frequently, first through seventh, generally are associated with the current non-traditional education movement. The items ranked eighth and ninth are generally considered characteristics of the most traditional institutions,

and they not only were ranked lowest, but had the lowest frequency selection. This data portends a significant assimilation of nontraditional practices into traditional American postsecondary institutions in the eighties. The research of this study, the review of current literature, and the findings of other related studies indicate that this assimilation has already begun.

> There should not be two sets of accreditation standards--one based on input measures for conventional programs and another, more rigorous output-oriented set for nontraditional programs. A common set of accreditation guidelines should be developed and should apply to both conventional and unconventional programs.

Should there be separate accreditation standards for nontraditional education? This is the most critical question before the COPA project. Our straightforward answer to the question is no, there should not be separate standards. The findings of this study clearly indicate that accreditation standards must develop from a single mode that will produce a conceptual framework that will accommodate all of postsecondary education. However, the achievement of this ideal will not be a simple matter. As Lewis Mayhew has said, "The question, bluntly put, is whether they [regional accrediting associations] can devise ways of accrediting that will on the one hand encourage innovation but at the same time maintain traditional standards of excellence."[33] The answer to Mayhew is an unqualified yes. The regional accrediting associations can, will, and are developing effective means for the qualitative assessment of nontraditional education. Their participation in this project is strong evidence of their commitment to appropriate evaluation

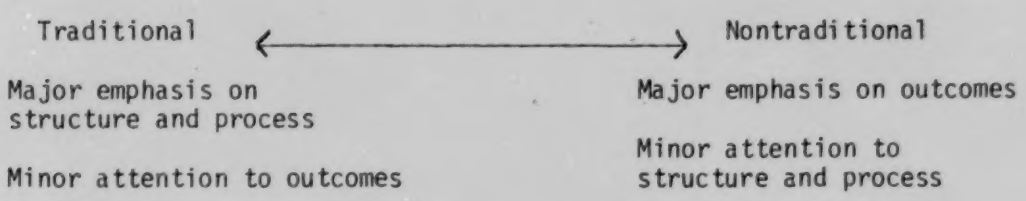
for standards of excellence in all forms of postsecondary education. The findings of the study indicate positive movement by the accrediting agencies in support of educational innovations.

The operational mode for the accrediting associations should be in keeping with the operational mode of American postsecondary education. As the operational mode of the institutions changes, that of accrediting associations will change. Earlier in this report we presented and discussed some of these changes and trends. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to restate briefly a basic premise from this study concerning the influences of nontraditional education on postsecondary education today.

American postsecondary education, though complex and multidimensional, may be viewed as a continuum with the traditional institutions and programs on one end and the nontraditional institutions and programs on the opposite end. Institutions predominantly traditional in characteristics emphasize structure and process with some attention given to educational outcomes. Institutions predominantly nontraditional in characteristics emphasize educational outcomes with some attention to structure and process. (See Figure 3, repeated below.)

Figure 3

Postsecondary Education Continuum



The process-oriented model of evaluation generally used by accrediting associations should be restructured into a process-performance model to accommodate all postsecondary education institutions regardless of the variation in operational modes or number of traditional or nontraditional characteristics. The development of such a model is supported by the results of the questionnaire in which educators were surveyed concerning the role and functions of accrediting associations.

In the national survey respondents reacted to items concerning the role of regional accreditation in the evaluation of nontraditional education. The first of these items was a list of a variety of educational practices that deviate from the conventional. The respondents were asked to select and rank the practices that they thought would most affect the basic policies and practices of the regional accrediting commissions. The selections were ranked as follows:

1st--Awarding credit for prior and experiential learning
2nd--Significant majority of the teaching faculty are adjunct appointees
3rd--Little or no residency requirements for degree candidates
4th--Centers for instruction far removed from the campus
5th--Courses and/or degrees offered by an accredited institution through a contractual relationship with another institution or an unaccredited organization or agency
6th--Individualized degree expectations or requirements usually formulated by contracts
7th--Stating degree requirements in terms of achievements rather than time or credit hours
8th--Heavy reliance on multi-media instruction for remote, independent study
9th--Individualized or self-paced instruction
10th--Emphasis on part-time older students.

The significance of this data is at least threefold. First, it is consistent with comparable data from the survey where respondents identified basic concerns about nontraditional education. Second, it

is significant in that it identifies, from the perspective of a broadly representative group, issues in nontraditional educational practices that the group considers important for accrediting officials. Third, the issues selected are consistent with most of those found in the research and review of the current literature in the field related to nontraditional education and accreditation.

The second survey item concerning the role of regional accreditation in the evaluation of nontraditional education dealt with the selection and ranking of a set of basic changes that accreditation should make in order to deal fairly and effectively in evaluating nontraditional education. The selections were ranked as follows:

1st--Focus more on educational results and less on structure and process
2nd--Become more concerned about assuring reasonable comparability in degree programs among institutions (that is, assure that given degrees in given fields have some common meaning in terms of student achievements when offered in different institutions)
3rd--Achieve a consensus on basic principles or standards which should characterize institutional structures and processes
4th--Find direct ways to examine student performances and products
5th--Use special evaluators to examine indepth the institution's provisions for quality assurance in addition to visiting teams
6th--Re-emphasize program accreditation in contrast to institutional-wide accreditation
7th--Refuse to deal with some curricular and institutional deviation as too extreme to be recognized by an accrediting association.

It is significant to note that of the items most frequently selected the first, second, and fourth deal directly with a shift of focus from structure and process to educational outcomes and student achievements in accreditation. Of equal importance is the low ranking

of the idea that accreditation should refuse to deal with extreme curricular and institutional departures from the conventional. This ranking combined with the almost equally low ranking of the concept of program accreditation in contrast to institutional-wide accreditation indicates a strong feeling that regional accreditation should deal with all forms of nontraditional education and should continue in the historical mode of accrediting the institution as a whole.

The third, and a most important, survey item concerned ranking the functions of voluntary, regional, institutional accreditation considered to be critical. The selections were ranked as follows:

1st--Promote institutional integrity and improvement
2nd--Assure that respective degrees represent certain minimal standards
3rd--Encourage sound innovative and imaginative approaches to producing quality instruction
4th--Protect the "consumer interest" of students and the general public
5th--Maintain the independence of the academy and protect academic freedom
6th--Help to improve the image of higher education to the general public
7th--Protect the historical prerogatives of faculty in curricular and instructional modes
8th--Protect the investment of established institutions from the incursion of new ones in search of markets
9th--Be an advocate for institutions to their sponsors whether religious, private, non-religious, or municipal, state, and federal governments.

The high ranking and frequency of selection for promotion of institutional integrity and improvement as a critical function for regional accreditation was not surprising and is significant in that it confirms the established purposes of accreditation as it is now practiced. Of greater significance is the indication that accrediting agencies should assure that degrees represent certain minimum standards and this concern

is reflected in the findings of the other research activities of the project.

The third-ranked and third most frequently selected function was to encourage sound innovative and imaginative approaches for producing quality instruction by accredited institutions. This was somewhat surprising and seems to indicate a new emphasis for accreditation. As it was discussed earlier in this report, accreditation, historically, has not taken a leadership role in institutional change or innovation.

The fourth-ranked function, with a signficant drop in the frequency of selection from that of the first three functions, was that of consumer protection. This is a signficant finding in that accreditation has been reluctant to assume a significant role in consumer protection apart from those factors involved in the assurance of minimum educational standards. This finding also seems to indicate a need for a shift of emphasis by accreditation in the future to assume a greater responsibility in the consumer interest area.

A final observation concerning the implications of the responses to this item relates to the significance of those functions which were the least selected and lowest ranked. These responses generally support the belief held by accrediting bodies that the boundary maintenance issues per se should not be a responsibility of the accrediting commissions.

> Accrediting agencies and academic institutions should cease the debate concerning whether traditional programs are "better" than nontraditional ones or vice versa and strive to develop quality educational programs that respond to individuals' needs--realizing that traditional and nontraditional programs are not

> mutually exclusive and the best programs for many students are a blend of the two. The individual seeking the educational services will choose the approach--traditional or nontraditional--which is best suited for his or her needs and learning style. Therefore, these approaches are alternatives, as seen from the perspective of the student.

All of the various components and constituent groups in American postsecondary education, regardless of form, structure, or mode of delivery, need to come together with a consensus of purpose for serving their various clienteles with quality education. The development of so many nontraditional educational programs in a relatively short time by a significant number of institutions can be viewed as an attempt to provide greater access to more effective learning for all students of all ages in postsecondary education. Perhaps this goal should become a common focus for all postsecondary educational institutions.

In summary, the significant findings of the COPA project are these:

- The nontraditional education movement is a positive and creative force in American postsecondary education providing added stimulus for needed reform and is specifically focused on the issues of equality of access, quality of results, and individual achievements.
- Nontraditional, alternative learning, as a concept, is achieving acceptance among the constituent groups of American postsecondary education.
- Primary problems with nontraditional education forms are internal and related to inadequacy of processes and procedures in implementation.
- An increasing number of traditional institutions are adapting and integrating the characteristics of the nontraditional movement into their own programs.
- A commitment to nontraditional education by the institution is essential for the development of acceptable programs--this includes the proper relationship to purpose, faculty support, and allocation of institutional resources.

- The critical questions about the purposes of postsecondary education in relation to curricula and degree expectations and assessment of educational outcomes have been raised as a result of the nontraditional ventures.
- Nontraditional education has been identified as a shift of valence rather than a split within postsecondary education.
- Institutional accreditation should operate within a single mode that will accommodate all of postsecondary education, recognizing both process and performance components in the evaluation of institutions.
- Institutional accreditation should consider and determine its appropriate role in such matters as institutional integrity and consumer protection.
- Traditionalists and nontraditionalists should close ranks and work together as equal partners in American postsecondary education to identify problems and find solutions.

Speculating on the future of American postsecondary education into the year 2000, Samuel B. Gould emphasized the need for internal cohesiveness:

> Higher education in the next quarter century may develop like a child growing up over whom we, as parents, have had responsibility but no control. . . .But the future of higher education also has the possibility of being based on firm convictions as to what it should be and how the achievements of clearly stated goals may be reached. And these should be goals and actions that originate in a unified sense of purpose within the academic world, stimulated by mutual respect, by a similar respect for external forces, and by mutual concern for the individual learner at any postsecondary level. Furthermore, they should be goals and actions that have their birth in internal initiatives, initiatives that represent more than reactions to temporal crises or pressures. What we need most, if we are to be strong in our educational position, is the courage to close ranks and take charge.[34]

# CHAPTER 4

# RECOMMENDATIONS

> My strong conviction is that the increasing interest in nontraditional education can, if handled in a disciplined way, do much to improve higher education. It can make us reconsider our purposes and seek for better ways of achieving educational results. It can bring new and desirable flexibility. Handled in a faddish or sloppy way, it will further erode standards and solid accomplishments in higher education. This places a heavy responsibility on regional accrediting agencies to steer colleges and universities in the former rather than the latter direction.
>
> Statement by
> Manning M. Pattillo, Jr.
> President, Oglethorpe University

## Introduction

The American postsecondary education system's basic process for establishing and maintaining educational standards is voluntary, nongovernmental accreditation. The present system of accreditation--the regional institution-based associations, national special-purpose associations, and specialized programmatic agencies--is represented nationally by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. The various associations that are the constituent members of COPA are united by a common commitment: to improve postsecondary education through evaluation for purposes of accreditation. The evolution of this voluntary system

of accreditation has parallelled the evolution of the system of post-secondary education. Until a decade or so ago, the American education system, though diverse in many ways, was relatively homogeneous in such basic characteristics as structure, faculties, students, programs, modes of instruction, admission and graduation requirements, and credentials awarded.

With the advent of the nontraditional movement in the late 1960s, a further diversification and a basic reform of postsecondary education began. Today, the nature, structure, and basic characteristics of institutions and the students they serve are significantly different and far more heterogeneous than at any other time in history. The implications of these basic changes in the postsecondary education system for voluntary accreditation are significant, placing heavy responsibility on the accrediting associations to evaluate and assure educational quality in a system undergoing great change.

While primary focus of this project has been on the evaluation and accreditation of nontraditional education, our research and study have made it very clear that a review of nontraditional education cannot and should not be made separate and apart from the basic system of postsecondary education in general. Also, a review of the accreditation activities of nontraditional education cannot be made without a review of the whole process of accreditation for postsecondary education.

A series of recommendations have grown out of the major findings of the study. These recommendations are intended to focus attention and to encourage action by the postsecondary education community, including the nontraditionalists, the accrediting associations, and the Council on

Postsecondary Accreditation, to accomplish reforms to provide access to new and existing programs of quality according to the legitimate educational needs of today's society.

Though responsibility for the dissemination and utilization of the findings of the project rests with the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and its governing board, four specific audiences have been addressed in General Recommendations for:

- Postsecondary Education in the United States
- Traditional and Nontraditional Educators
- Accrediting Associations
- The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

## General Recommendations for Postsecondary Education in the United States

RECOMMENDATION ONE

That the institution-based, voluntary nongovernmental organizations, associations, and agencies formally address the current thrust for constructive change in postsecondary education to achieve the following goals:

1. Give Definition and Direction for Reform in Postsecondary Education

   a. To define more clearly the nature of the change needed,

   b. To develop a clear set of achievable goals for change,

   c. To provide coordination for and direction to constructive change,

   d. To identify and define roles and responsibilities in accomplishing change for the various components of postsecondary education, including the organizations and agencies themselves, the individual institutions and their faculties and staffs, government and other representatives of the public, and

e. To designate an organization or agency (such as the American Council on Education) to coordinate these activities and to codify, define, and expedite appropriate change.

2. Recognize the Nontraditional Education Movement

a. As an example of constructive reform in postsecondary education that has contributed signficantly to the issues of quality of access and individual achievements.

b. As an intrinsic element in postsecondary education with a decade of developments and achievements that can be adapted to the traditional institutions, and

c. As a catalyst from within postsecondary education to stimulate further constructive change of postsecondary education.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

That institutions of postsecondary education review their purposes and functions to provide more effective learning that is flexible and rigorous and focuses on educational achievement.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

That postsecondary educational institutions that develop nontraditional educational programs assume the responsibility to do so with quality. That they not begin nontraditional programs until they have achieved (1) administration and faculty commitment to alternative approaches to education that are appropriate to the institution's purpose and mission, (2) appropriate authorization from governing and faculty approval bodies, (3) a fully developed curriculum, and (4) adequate educational and financial resources for successful implementation.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

That major research efforts be undertaken by representative and responsible institutions, agencies, and organizations of postsecondary education to develop a variety of reliable measures and techniques for the assessment of educational accomplishments (outcomes) for adaptation and use by post-secondary institutions.

General Recommendations for Nontraditional Education

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

That educators work cooperatively to integrate the nontraditional movement into the mainstream of conventional institutions and programs in order to:

1. Facilitate constructive changes and innovations for all postsecondary educational institutions,
2. Improve the perceptions of traditionalists who are skeptical of nontraditional programs.
3. Secure legitimization and assistance through the normal academic processes of the institution for quality assurance of programs and credentials offered.
4. Assist in achieving an internal cohesiveness and consistency in programs and credentials offered by postsecondary educational institutions, and
5. Eliminate the dichotomy within American postsecondary education between the traditional and nontraditional.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

That nontraditional institutions and nontraditionalists operating within conventional institutions exercise great caution in the establishment of external relationships (e.g., for the procurement of services and programs; recruitment of students; use of faculty, facilities, and

other learning resources; and the delivery of programs) with contracting institutions, agencies, organizations, and individuals, to insure that their practices are ethical and acceptable. That the integrity of the institution or program be unquestionable. That the entrepreneur with charlatan characteristics (whether institution, agency, or individual) where personal profit is a primary goal not be accepted or tolerated.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

That nontraditional institutions and programs be carefully developed with processes adequate for successful implementation of programs representative of and acceptable to postsecondary education in general. That processes include an appropriate system for the assurance of quality in programs and for the assessment of individual educational outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

That the essential components and elements characteristic of a postsecondary educational institution or program be appropriately developed and implemented to support the programs offered and the credentials awarded. That structure and function of the institution and/or program be appropriate to the level of the credential to be awarded. That normal expectations for certificate and diploma, undergraduate, and graduate credentials be observed. That the taxonomy of institutional and program characteristics (essential elements and components) and the report of the Task Force on Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education be used.

## General Recommendations for Accrediting Associations

RECOMMENDATION NINE

That voluntary, nongovernmental accreditation expands its basic concept to include educational accomplishment and performance (outcomes) in its process in response to the current thrust in postsecondary education that focuses more on the effectiveness of the education offered and less on the form, structure, and delivery employed. That there be a consistent philosophy of accreditation that is conceptual in nature and that recognizes and accommodates traditional and nontraditional postsecondary education within a common framework for assessing quality.

RECOMMENDATION TEN

That the format and process for evaluation of institutions and programs normally used by institutional and program accreditation be changed from a process orientation to a process-performance evaluation system. Such a modification requires the following:

1. That current standards of criteria and procedures for accreditation be reviewed to determine if there is a significant presumption of traditionality;

2. That standards of criteria and procedures be modified where necessary to recognize the valence of an institution, toward the traditional or nontraditional, in the accreditation process;

3. That procedures for accreditation be used to evaluate effectively an institution or program's educational process, emphasizing the direct assessment of learning outcomes and student performance for educational attainments; and

4. That special training and orientation on the evaluation of outcome-procedures be provided for individuals who participate in on-site evaluation committees for accrediting associations.

RECOMMENDATION ELEVEN

That the accrediting association responsible for the evaluation of an institution or program require that the institution or program place major emphasis on learning to demonstrate that it:

1. Has clear educational goals and objectives that are sufficiently explicit to be assessable and that presuppose in their realization the learning necessary for successful performance in the fields for which students are being educated.

2. Maintains a system of educational delivery that embraces and affords the opportunity for learning;

3. Applies performance criteria that, if met, would reasonably assure graduates of competence in the area for which they are being prepared; and

4. Employs effective instruments to assess student attainments which would be acceptable if independently examined by recognized scholars.

RECOMMENDATION TWELVE

That the institution and the appropriate accrediting agency assure that the educational process is appropriately structured to provide the necessary learning experience commensurate with the credential to be awarded. That specific degree designations have both explicit and implicit requirements and expectations, verified and validated in the accreditation process, of the educational experience and institutional processes.*

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*The research reports of the project on certificate, undergraduate, and graduate education and the report of the Task Force on Credentialing Educational Accomplishment of the American Council on Education provide useful information in support of this recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION THIRTEEN

That accrediting associations incorporate specific information on the evaluation of nontraditional education and outcomes assessment into their orientation and training programs for on-site evaluators, review committee members, and commission members involved in the accreditation decision-making process. That care be taken to insure that the individuals and institutions concerned are fully informed of the procedures and criteria to be used in the evaluation when unconventional and innovative review techniques are employed by the accrediting associations.

RECOMMENDATION FOURTEEN

That policies and procedures of institutional accrediting associations be comprehensive in scope so as to incorporate into the initial and subsequent evaluations all components of a postsecondary educational institution, including non-campus-based forms of study; contractual arrangements with other institutions, agencies, or organizations; and experiential education. That the appropriate institutional accrediting associations and state agencies cooperate when institutional operations are interregional.

RECOMMENDATION FIFTEEN

That specialized, accrediting associations review their standards and procedures for accreditation to see that alternative approaches to traditional specialized education, where appropriate, are encouraged.

RECOMMENDATION SIXTEEN

That accrediting associations clearly assert to their constituents and the public that the central purposes of accreditation in postsecondary education are to provide institutional improvement and to assure educational quality through evaluation. That accrediting associations clearly assert that they do not have jurisdiction over issues of territorial protection and boundary maintenance among institutions.

RECOMMENDATION SEVENTEEN

That new or expanded roles for accrediting associations be carefully reviewed in light of the nontraditional movement, which has implications regarding innovation, consumer protection, enforcement of government regulations, and social responsibilities. That accrediting associations assume only those roles that are appropriate to accreditation and for which accreditation has unique responsibilities, clearly defining and articulating those roles to the constituent groups of postsecondary education and to the public.

## General Recommendations for the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

RECOMMENDATION EIGHTEEN

That, in recognition of the evolutionary status of the nontraditional education movement and in recognition of the impact and influence of the movement on American postsecondary education and its system of accreditation, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation establish

an on-going Task Force on the Accreditation of Nontraditional Education:

1. To monitor the nontraditional education movement to identify trends and new developments;

2. To assess the relationship and relevance of the trends and new developments for accreditation;

3. To recommend appropriate courses of action for the various accrediting commissions and COPA, based on changes that occur in the nontraditional education movement that have implications for accreditation;

4. To review and recommend changes on a continuing basis to the COPA policy on the "Evaluation and Accreditation of Nontraditional Education;"

5. To assist COPA in the implications of the recommendations of the Project on Nontraditional Education.

Further, that the task force be representative of the constituent membership of COPA and postsecondary education and include at least the following nine representatives:

| | |
|---|---|
| Regional institutional associations | - TWO |
| National institutional associations | - ONE |
| Specialized associations | - TWO |
| Postsecondary institutional associations | - ONE |
| Nontraditional institutions or programs | - TWO |
| State postsecondary education bodies | - ONE |

RECOMMENDATION NINETEEN

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, as the national coordinating organization for nongovernmental accreditation, determine the role and function of voluntary accreditation in the movement for constructive change and reform that is taking place in American postsecondary education. That COPA assist, as appropriate, the institution-based, voluntary, nongovernmental organizations, associations, and agencies in the implementation of RECOMMENDATION ONE.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and its constituent members work cooperatively through the accreditation process toward the achievement of continuity and a cohesiveness of purpose, role, function, and basic structure of American postsecondary education. (NOTE: This recommendation relates directly to the identification and maintenance of the basic characteristics, components, and essential elements of accreditable institutions and programs of postsecondary education. The taxonomy developed in this project and the various research reports provide useful resource materials for this activity.)

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-ONE

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation encourage its member accrediting associations to revise their procedures to include a process-performance evaluation system that places emphasis on the assessment of educational accomplishments for accreditation purposes.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-TWO

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation initiate and maintain formal relationships with appropriate federal, state, and nongovernmental accrediting agencies to identify and define the interrelated roles and functions of the triad in the recognition, licensing, certifying, and accrediting processes.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-THREE

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation work cooperatively with the American Council on Education and the other institution-based

organizations to identify and define educational credentials and degrees in order to clarify their purpose, structure, and meaning and to insure the appropriate use of nomenclature by accredited institutions and programs.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-FOUR

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, in cooperation with other appropriate agencies, develop ways and means to increase public confidence in the nongovernmental process of self-regulation as an effective means for improving education and assessing institutional and program quality, whether traditional or nontraditional.

RECOMMENDATION TWENTY-FIVE

That the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation formally endorse the concept of quality nontraditional education as a vehicle of constructive change in American postsecondary education that can assist in extending access to postsecondary education to all citizens of the United States who desire learning throughout life.

## Proposed Policy Statement on the Accreditation of Nontraditional Education

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation through its executive board and constituent members should develop and issue a policy statement concerning the accreditation of nontraditional education. The purposes of such a policy statement would be (1) to assure that each COPA-recognized accrediting agency has incorporated into its operating procedures an appropriate accommodation of nontraditional education, and (2) to assure a rigorous, but reasonable and uniform, approach to the evaluation of nontraditional education for purposes of accreditation.

In the development of the policy statement the COPA Board should give careful consideration to the following concepts, issues, and elements for inclusion in the statement:

### Concepts

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is dedicated to the belief that the process of institutional self-regulation and peer review through nongovernmental accreditation promotes the improvement of postsecondary education and provides for a reasonable assurance of quality in postsecondary education. COPA asserts that accreditation should be carried out within a common framework for assessing and assuring quality that recognizes all forms of postsecondary education.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should recognize and endorse the nontraditional education movement as a needed and constructive change within postsecondary education when properly implemented with quality, a movement that greatly expands access to postsecondary education for the

citizens of the United States, especially adults, who desire learning throughout life.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is dedicated to the principle that the accrediting model, now primarily a "process model," should be restructured to include the assessment of educational outcomes or performance. COPA should accept the responsibility to encourage and assist its constituent members in the evaluation of educational quality through the measurement of educational outcomes. The appraisal of educational outcomes in postsecondary education will require that the COPA-recognized accrediting agencies expand their standards or criteria and procedures to recognize educational accomplishments in the process of evaluation for purposes of accreditation.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should assert that for nongovernmental accreditation to maintain its value for and credibility with the public as a means for educational improvement and as a measure of institutional and program quality, whether traditional or nontraditional, the COPA-recognized accrediting agencies must assure that their standards or criteria and evaluation procedures are comprehensive in nature and include all forms of postsecondary education, regardless of delivery system or location (e.g., all non-campus-based forms of study such as contractual relationships with other institutions, agencies, or organizations; experiential learning; external degrees; and off-campus programs including military base education).

Issues

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is dedicated to the principle that educational credentials convey important information

about learning accomplishments and therefore, the accrediting agencies recognized by COPA have the responsibility to assure in their review and evaluation of institutions and programs, traditional or nontraditional, that the educational process is appropriately structured to provide the learning experience commensurate with whatever credential is to be awarded.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should assert that the recognition of experiential learning for appropriate academic credit is a proper function for an accredited institution of postsecondary education. When awarding credit for prior learning based on the experience of the student, the institution should have appropriate and effective policies and procedures, which have been validated by the appropriate accrediting agency, for the documentation and assessment of such learning. The evaluation procedures should include such factors as the relationship of the learning values from the experience to the student's current educational goals and the amount of credit to be allowed.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation expects the accrediting agencies it recognizes to include in their accrediting process, procedures for the systematic and regular review and evaluation of all off-campus learning opportunities offered by accredited institutions. Where institutional educational operations are interregional, cooperation with other appropriate accrediting agencies should be mandatory. Quality assurance of postsecondary educational programs offered on military installations is the joint responsibility not only of the institutions and accrediting agencies involved but also of the military services involved. It is essential that COPA-recognized agencies include the review of any military

base education programs, in the evaluation of institutions for accreditation purposes.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should assert the right and responsibility of its recognized accrediting agencies to prohibit an accredited institution or program from lending the prestige or authority of its accreditation to courses, programs, and degrees offered under contract with organizations not accredited. When an accredited institution contracts for educational programs and services, all courses offered and credentials awarded must remain under the sole and direct control of the accredited institution and must be consistent with the institution's purpose. Appropriate institutional policies and procedures must be developed to insure acceptable practice in the recruitment and counseling of students' admissions; instruction (including qualification of faculty); evaluation of student progress; record-keeping; the setting and collecting of tuition and fees; the granting of credit for advanced standing based on transfer; experience or prior learning; nature and location of courses; the provision of instructional learning resources; field experiences; and the awarding of educational credentials. COPA-recognized accrediting agencies should include in the review and evaluation process for accredited institutions and programs validation procedures to assure the quality of courses and program offered through contract relationships and to attest to the control by the accredited institution.

Elements

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should urge that its recognized specialized accrediting agencies give particular attention

to their standards or criteria for accreditation to assure that alternative approaches in specialized learning are encouraged where appropriate and that the accreditation process used is designed to assure quality of the education offered and the learning achieved (outcomes).

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is dedicated to the principle that the function of institutional accreditation is the accrediting of an institution as a whole. COPA should assert that its recognized institutional accrediting agencies have the responsibility to include all educational components and operations of a postsecondary education institution in their initial and subsequent evaluations and reviews for accreditation purposes.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should urge that its recognized accrediting agencies, specialized and institutional, incorporate specific information and guidelines on the evaluation of nontraditional education into the training and orientation for on-site evaluators, review committee members, and accrediting commission members involved in the decision-making process for accreditation.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should insure, through its regular process for review and recognition of accrediting agencies for membership, that the policy is implemented successfully.

## Other Recommendations

Eight significant research reports have been produced as a result of the various activities of the project. Each of these reports contains information on the research findings in the specific area assigned. For a full review of the findings and recommendations of the COPA Project on the Accreditation of Nontraditional Education all of these reports should be read.

Each report stands independently and represents the work of its author or authors. Conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports are based on the research and analysis of the various parts of the study and represent the judgment of the authors.

The eight reports are as follows:

Report No. 1 Nontraditional Certificate Programs (John Harris and Philip McCullough)

Report No. 2 Salient Points from "A Study of the Acceptability and Negotiability of External Degrees" (Prepared by John Harris)

Report No. 3 Institutional Accreditation and Nontraditional Undergraduate Educational Institutions and Programs (John Harris)

Report No. 4 Problems and Principles in the Recognition of Accreditation of Graduate Programs (Paul Dressel)

Report No. 5 Critical characteristics of an Accreditable Institution, Basic Purposes of Accreditation, and Nontraditional Forms of Most Concern (John Harris)

Report No. 6 A Review of Nontraditional Graduate Degrees (with particular emphasis on the problems of accreditation) (Paul Dressel)

Report No. 7 A Taxonomy for the Classification and Determination of the Nontraditional Nature of Postsecondary Educational Institutions: Essential Components,

Elements, and Criteria for Evaluation (Philip McCullough and Grover Andrews)

Report No. 8 Analysis of the National Survey on Accreditation and Nontraditional Education (John Harris and Grover Andrews)

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3. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Quality and Equality: New Levels of Federal Responsibility for Higher Education (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 1.

4. Diversity by Design, p. xv.

5. Ibid.

6. Edward G. Simpson, "An Assessment of Nontraditional Education among the Collegiate Members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools" (Ed.D. diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1977), p. 43.

7. Carol P. Sosdian and Laure M. Sharp, The External Degree as a Credential: Graduates' Experiences in Employment and Further Study (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Social Science Research, 1978), p. 124.

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14. Ibid.

15. Norman Burns, Evaluation of Institutions of Postsecondary Education: Assessment in Terms of Outcomes Through Institutional Self-Study (Washington, D.C.: Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, 1978), p. 5.

16. John Harris, Report No. 2 in volume 2 of this study.

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18. Paul Dressel, Report No. 3 in volume 2 of this study.

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26. Education Division, Lifelong Learning and Public Policy (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978), p. 1.

27. Stephen H. Spurr, Academic Degree Structures: Innovative Approaches (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), pp. 6-7.

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# APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

# A SEQUENTIAL EVALUATION MODEL FOR INSTITUTIONS WITH OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

A Paper Prepared
for the
Project of the
Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
to
Develop Evaluative Criteria and Procedures
for the
Accreditation of Nontraditional Education

by
Patricia A. Thrash
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

September 30, 1978

# A SEQUENTIAL EVALUATION MODEL FOR INSTITUTIONS WITH OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS*

This paper indicates the approach of the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education to the evaluation of institutions with off-campus programs and describes the experiences of Commission staff members in the development of sequential evaluations for institutions with off-campus programs. As a result of these evaluation experiences a sequential evaluation model has been produced which may be useful in designing future sequential evaluations. Examples of materials developed for the evaluation of a number of institutions with off-campus programs are included as appendices to this paper.

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* The writer acknowledges with appreciation the contributions of a number of people to the development of this paper: Evaluators William Hazard, Barbara Mickey, Donald Roush, Wilson Thiede, Catherine Warrick, and Donald McCarty; President Leigh Gerdine and Vice President Joseph Kelly of Webster College; President Bruce Kelly of Columbia College; Richard Doyle of Central Michigan University; Commission Director Thurston Manning; and Commission Staff Assistant Susan Birnbaum.

## I. The Commission's statement on institutions with off-campus programs

The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools has in recent years evaluated a number of institutions with off-campus programs. Out of that experience and as a result of a comprehensive survey of off-campus programs offered by postsecondary institutions accredited by the North Central Association, the Commission developed a Statement on Off-Campus Programs which was endorsed by its Executive Board on July 24, 1978. This statement is included as Appendix A.

The statement rejects suggestions made by some that the accrediting associations should impose "tighter controls" and adopt extensive and restrictive additional regulations governing off-campus programs in accredited institutions and confirms the position of the Commission, based on its experience in the evaluation of institutions with off-campus programs, that the policies and procedures already in place in the work of the Commission represent ways in which off-campus programs of poor quality are discouraged without restricting the continued existence and growth of good quality programs. Included in these policies and procedures are the following:

1. The regular examination of off-campus programs as a part of our comprehensive evaluations of all institutions accredited by us. In recent years such examinations have taken our visiting teams throughout the United States, as visits have been made to many off-campus sites.

2. Insistence, through one of our criteria of eligibility, that an institution meet all the legal requirements imposed for offering courses and credits in each state in which it operates.

3. Cooperation among the several regional accrediting associations, so that off-campus sites located outside the home region of an institution are examined by teams including evaluators from several regions. In recent years we have, following this policy, had on North Central teams evaluators from all the other regions.

4. Regarding the establishment of programs of off-campus instruction as an indication of possible substantive change within an institution. Under our substantive change policy, such a change is a signal for a comprehensive examination of the institution, which must be completed, with action approving the change, before the change can be instituted.

5. Requiring more frequent evaluations of institutions experiencing rapid change. Our experience is that many off-campus programs, particularly those conducted far from the home campus, experience many and frequent changes as institutions seek new ways to monitor and guarantee educational quality. In some cases we have provided partial or complete institutional evaluations in successive years for institutions exhibiting such rapidity of change as a result of their off-campus operations.

6. Improvement of regular reporting by institutions to the Commission offices. Our institutional annual reports now ask that institutions conducting off-campus activities outside their home states provide the Commission with a list of all out-of-state sites. Staff monitoring of these reports is a way of our being continually apprised of changes and developments within the institutions.

7. The Commission has recommended to institutions at their request persons to provide consulting assistance in the development and evaluation of off-campus programs. While such consultation is apart from the regular evaluative processes of the Commission, it is a valuable service to our affiliated institutions, and the reports of the Commission-recommended consultants are available to our visiting teams.

II. Commission staff experiences in the development of sequential evaluations

The Commission has demonstrated its ability to develop appropriate procedures for the evaluation of "nontraditional" institutions. These efforts have been reported periodically in the NCA Today and the North Central Association Quarterly, with special attention given to Commission procedures for the evaluation of nontraditional graduate programs, competency-based curricula, external degree programs, and off-campus programs, including military base programs. (1)

As Commission staff coordinated the evaluations of an increasing number of nontraditional institutions we found that, because these institutions were doing new things and were changing rapidly, they required special and intensive scrutiny. A primary concern was to determine whether the nontraditional institution or the institution with nontraditional programs had clear and publicly stated purposes appropriate to a postsecondary institution and the resources to accomplish those purposes. The Commission focused on educational outcomes as well as institutional resources and processes in making this determination.

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1 H. Victor Baldi, "External Degree Programs: In Search of New Definitions for Quality," North Central Association Quarterly (Vol. 51, No. 2, Fall 1976), pages 275-279.

Patricia A. Thrash, "Nontraditional Institutions and Programs: A Challenge for the Accreditation Process," North Central Association Quarterly (Vol. 49, No. 3, Winter 1975), pages 321-333. (This includes attachments of the FRACHE Interim Statement on Accreditation and Non-Traditional Study and the FRACHE Interim Guidelines on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations.)

Patricia A. Thrash, "Evaluation of Nontraditional Learning Forms: The Extended Campus Program," North Central Association Quarterly (Vol. 51, No. 1, Fall 1976), pages 280-287.

Patricia A. Thrash, "Perspective: Older Students Find Buyer's Market in Universities," NCA Today (Vol. 21, No. 3, June 1977), page 5.

Patricia A. Thrash, "The Eureka! Factor: An Inquiry Into Educational Alternatives," North Central Association Quarterly (Vol. 52, No. 4, Spring 1978), pages 455-463.

The Commission staff discovered in its initial attempts to develop effective evaluation processes for nontraditional institutions that special efforts were required beyond those ordinarily applied in the traditional or standard evaluation. It was useful to have a clear understanding with the institution concerning the nature, design, and content of the institution's self-study report; the purposes and expected outcomes of the evaluation; and desired evaluator competencies.

We also discovered that the standard on-site evaluation format of a team of persons visiting an institution for a single period of three days was not an adequate format for the evaluation of an institution which offered its programs at a number of geographically dispersed sites, some outside the state of the institution's original jurisdiction. Consequently, we experimented with the development of sequential evaluation designs for a number of institutions.

The standard evaluation design may be characterized as summative; that is, a concentrated effort is made by a team during a single on-site visit for a limited period of time to examine an institution and to develop a report which summarizes the team's perception of the institution at that point in time. The sequential evaluation design may be characterized as formative; it is a format which permits the examination of an institution by the total team and various sub-teams through a series of visits over a period of months for the purpose of validating the institution's development and its responses to earlier team suggestions and, in the case of institutions with off-campus programs, for determining whether those programs are appropriate to the mission of the institution and are programs of quality. Out of this formative interaction between the institution and the evaluation team, through a series of visits over a period of time, a summative determination is ultimately made about the accreditability of the institution.

Sequential evaluation designs were used in the evaluation of a variety of nontraditional institutions: Antioch College, the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities (University Without Walls and Union Graduate School), and Metropolitan State University. In the evaluation of institutions with off-campus programs outside the North Central region--Columbia College (Missouri) and Webster College, for example--sequential evaluation designs were found to be particularly appropriate. Because of the need for comparable information from the sites visited, the Commission staff also found it useful to develop special instruments to assist the team in gathering common data across sites.

In the paragraphs to follow I will offer a personal account of my experience as a Commission staff member in developing a series of sequential evaluations.

A number of evaluators and institutional representatives have assisted in these developmental efforts to formulate an effective sequential evaluation design and instruments for use in the evaluation of institutions with off-campus programs in other accrediting regions. Evaluators William Hazard and Barbara Mickey assisted in the design of the first instrument, which contained procedures for site reviews and a questionnaire to be applied in an evaluation focused on the off-campus sites of Columbia College, Missouri, in Fall 1976. The instrument was used by two-person sub-teams (one NCA member plus one member from another region) to gain consistent information across sites. When the focused evaluation was completed, the two NCA core team members prepared an assessment of the process with suggestions for subsequent evaluations of off-campus programs.

The next experience was with a comprehensive evaluation of Webster College, Missouri, including its extended campus programs in the Southern Association's region, October 1977 - January 1978. Meetings were scheduled in the Evanston office of the Commission and at the institution, so that Webster's President Leigh Gerdine and Vice-President Joseph Kelly and team chairperson Donald Roush could work closely with the Commission staff person in the formulation of a sequential evaluation design that included an initial visit by the total team to Webster's main campus, a series of visits by two-person sub-teams to selected sites in the two accrediting regions where Webster offered programs, and a final visit by the total team to the home campus.

The instrument developed earlier for Columbia College was adapted for the evaluation of Webster's extended campus sites. However, after testing the new instrument, the Basic Site Data Form, at off-campus sites near the home campus during the initial visit, team members and institutional representatives agreed that the instrument should be redesigned so that instead of providing a set of questions to guide the team members in their interviews, it would contain essential information and analysis on common, agreed-upon dimensions prepared by site officials and presented to the team before the site visit. This information was to supplement the materials provided in the institution's self-study report about overall organization, academic offerings, and quality control in its off-campus sites. The task of the team would then be to validate both the information and the analysis provided by the site staff, to seek additional information if it was needed, and to write a report along several critical summary dimensions agreed upon earlier (quality of work offered, relation of program to college degree requirements, general administration and quality control, and comparability of work on campus and at extended campus sites). Team member Catherine Warrick assisted the Commission staff person in a swift revision of the instrument during the initial visit to the home campus.

The revised Basic Site Data Forms were used for the subsequent site visits. Draft reports of the initial visit to the home campus and the visits to off-campus sites were distributed to the team members, President Gerdine, and the Commission office for review before the final visit to the home campus. Both institutional representatives and team members agreed that the revised instrument was much more effective: (1) it provided a modified self-study and assessment experience for the site personnel; and (2) it freed team members from data-gathering of a detailed, informational nature, allowing them more time to validate the information and assessments provided by site personnel and to make judgments about the overall quality of the programs at the site.

Therefore, for the comprehensive evaluation of Columbia College, Missouri, including its extended campus sites, in Spring 1978, the Commission staff worked with President Bruce Kelly and team chairperson Wilson Thiede in the development of a sequential evaluation design and instruments which would incorporate all that had been learned earlier. Because of the effectiveness of that process, President Bruce Kelly has agreed to the publication of the materials developed for that evaluation--the Institutional Summary Sheet and Evaluation Schedule, the Evaluation Design for Columbia College (Missouri), Procedures for the Evaluation of Extended Studies Division Sites of Columbia College (Missouri), and the Basic Site Data Forms--as appendices to this report. (Appendices B-E)

Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, is currently adapting the sequential evaluation model for its evaluation scheduled during 1978-79. Central Michigan University representatives have also formulated a series of questions to assist evaluators in their validation of the information provided in the Basic Site Data Forms. These questions are included as Appendix F.

III. A sequential evaluation model

Out of these and other experiences with sequential evaluations, the Commission staff has developed a sequential evaluation model which may be useful in the design of sequential evaluations for other institutions. The purpose of this section of the report is to provide a brief description of a sequential evaluation model, including instruments developed for the evaluation of institutions with off-campus programs, and to summarize steps in the development and implementation of the evaluation design.

Description. A sequential evaluation model is a format designed to provide an effective formative evaluation of an institution with off-campus programs in terms of its purposes, processes, resources, and outcomes on the central campus and, through the application of instruments designed to validate pre-selected common elements at the off-campus sites, to make a determination concerning the adequacy and quality of these sites which are included in the institution's accreditation.

Steps in the application of the model to the development and implementation of the evaluation design. The steps in the development and implementation of the model can be divided into three stages: preparations for the sequential evaluation visit, conduct of the evaluation visit, and the preparation of the team report of the evaluation.

A. Preparation for the evaluation visit. Institutional representatives and Commission staff meet to develop a formal agreement regarding the purposes of the evaluation, expected outcomes, desired evaluator competencies, and the evaluation fee. Essential tasks to be completed as a result of this meeting are:

1. Review of the institution's self-study report (to determine its adequacy for the sequential evaluation process).

2. Development of the sequential evaluation design (usually in three phases; the total team meets at the home campus at the beginning and conclusion of the process, while sub-teams visit the off-campus sites during the middle phase of the process).

3. Selection of off-campus sites to be visited (a cross-section of sites, at least two in each accrediting region, which represent both the variety of programs offered and the stages of development of the sites).

4. Development of Basic Site Data Forms to be used in the evaluation of off-campus sites (to provide information on common, agreed-upon dimensions across sites to be validated by sub-teams of the total team during their visits to the off-campus sites).

Although it is not essential to the sequential evaluation process, Commission staff and institutional representatives have found it useful to develop a statement which accurately describes the current status of the institution, including its off-campus programs, with the Commission. To this statement may be attached a list of the off-campus sites (location, programs, approximate number of classes and number of students, dates the program is offered). The statement can then be reproduced on Commission letterhead for distribution both by the Commission and the institution in response to queries about the institution and its off-campus programs. The current statement developed for Webster College is included as Appendix G.

B. The sequential evaluation visit. A typical sequential evaluation visit is scheduled in three phases, with a time frame that permits the development and review of draft reports of each phase of the visit by the team members, institutional representatives, and Commission staff before the final phase of the visit. Sufficient time is also built into the process for the review of the final report and the development of an official institutional response to the report by the institutional representatives.

Phase One: The initial visit to the home campus is made by the total team. The purpose of the initial phase is to provide an orientation to the sequential evaluation process, to evaluate the programs on the main campus, and to test the Basic Site Data Forms at nearby extended-campus sites. At this time the team determines whether revision should be made in the site instrument. The Exit Interview provides a opportunity for team members and institutional representatives to discuss findings, ask questions, and suggest next steps. Following the visit, the team prepares a draft report of Initial Impressions, Tentative Findings, and Suggestions for Remaining Phases of the Visit.

Phase Two: Site visits are made by two-person teams from the total team to selected extended campus sites in each of the accrediting regions in which the College offers its programs. Team members receive the Basic Site Data Forms designed to insure comparability of information before the visits. Following the visits the teams prepare brief reports according to an agreed-upon format. The Basic Site Data Forms serve as attachments to the site reports of the team.

Phase three: The total team reconvenes at the home campus for a final visit to confirm findings and to draft the final report. The team, institutional representatives, and the Commission staff person have received the tentative reports from Phase One and Phase Two in advance of the Phase Three visit. The team's accrediting recommendation is given at the Exit Interview, which is Commission procedure for all institutional evaluations.

C. Preparation of the team report of the evaluation. Following the visit, the team chairperson prepares the draft report of the evaluation. After corrections of errors of fact are made by the institutional representatives, the chairperson prepares the final report of the visit. Because of the unusual nature of the evaluation, the introduction to the report should clearly indicate the purpose and design of the visit. The report usually has three parts: (1) a summative report which presents the team's overall assessment of the institution, including its off-campus programs, a summary of strengths and concerns, and the team's accrediting recommendation with the reasons for the recommendation; (2) the reports of the off-campus site visits, with the Basic Site Data Forms as attachments; and (3) appendices consisting of the materials prepared for the visit: Institutional Summary Sheet (a summary of essential information relating to the visit), Evaluation Design for the Sequential Evaluation and Procedures for the Evaluation of Extended Campus Sites and the Basic Site Data Forms.

A team report prepared in this manner is a useful and comprehensive record of the sequential evaluation visit. It also provides essential information to the Review Committee members of the Commission whose task it is to consider the team report and recommendations, along with the institution's response, and to offer a judgment to the Executive Board of the Commission that the team's recommendation be accepted or revised before the final accrediting action is taken.

## IV. Observations on the sequential evaluation process

Out of my experience in the development of sequential evaluation designs for a number of institutions, I have suggested a sequential evaluation model as an effective mechanism for the evaluation of an institution with off-campus programs at geographically-dispersed sites. However, those who consider adapting the sequential evaluation model to their own institutional evaluation should be aware of the special demands that the model places upon both the institution and its accrediting commission.

The development of a sequential evaluation requires serious attention by the institution and the commission to a wide variety of details for the coordination of the visit. Factors which must be considered include: development of agreements about the nature of the visit, the evaluation design, the instruments, and the logisitics of the evaluation; preparation and dissemination of materials related to the visit; selection of a team of experienced evaluators who have skills and competencies appropriate to the institution and who are open to the evaluation of different forms of learning;

communication with other regional executives for the selection of evaluators from those regions to serve as members of the evaluation team; notification to appropriate state agency officials of visits to sites in their states. The time necessitated for these preparations is considerable. The administrative costs of these preparations are substantial, as is the cost of deploying a team to a number of sites for a number of days.

The team chairperson must be willing to make an extensive professional commitment to a lengthy and demanding evaluation process, engaging in the initial planning of the visit with institutional representatives and commission staff, coordinating the team through the various phases of the visit, and developing a comprehensive and exacting report that is useful to both the institution and the commission. Significant commitment is also required of the evaluation team members who must devote six to ten days to on-site visits during the evaluation period, and who must contribute to the development of the site visit reports.

Allowance must be made in the time period of the sequential evaluation visit for adequate review of the team reports of the various site visits, for review of the final team report, and for the preparation of the institution's response to the report. Finally, special efforts are required to make Commissioners who serve on review committees and Executive Board members who make the final accrediting decision aware of the special purpose and unusual nature of a sequential evaluation visit.

Having offered these caveats, I would like to emphasize my personal conviction that the special efforts required are justified. There is a clearer understanding on the part of the institution and the commission of the purposes of accreditation and the outcomes of the evaluation process. Those evaluators who have participated in a sequential visit agree that the process stretches their abilities and brings them new insights into the accountability of evaluators. While the sequential evaluation model is not appropriate for every institution or for every evaluation, all institutions would benefit from an evaluation process in which institutional representatives and commission staff members work together from the outset to determine the purposes, procedures, and desired outcomes of the visit.

Patricia A. Thrash
September 29, 1978

APPENDIX A

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| Section A | Statement on Off-Campus Programs |
| Section B | Columbia College Institutional Summary Sheet and Evaluation Schedule |
| Section C | Evaluation Design for Columbia College (Missouri) |
| Section D | Procedures for the Evaluation of Extended Studies Division Sites of Columbia College (Missouri) |
| Section E | Columbia College (Missouri) Basic Site Data Forms |
| Section F | Central Michigan University Questions (to assist evaluators in the validation of the information provided in the Basic Site Data Forms) |
| Section G | Statement on the Accreditation Status of Webster College (with attached list of the extended studies sites at which Webster College currently offers programs) |

SECTION A

## STATEMENT ON OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

Endorsed by the Executive Board
of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education,
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Recent years have seen an increase in concern about programs offered off-campus by institutions of higher education. Much of this concern has been directed to alleged lack of educational quality in such programs. Such allegations have usually been supported by only isolated examples, but conclusions have been drawn -- or at least implied -- about all programs offered away from the campus environment. Suggestions have been made that the accrediting associations should impose "tighter controls" and adopt extensive and restrictive regulations governing off-campus programs in accredited institutions.

The Commission staff has recently completed a comprehensive survey of off-campus programs offered by postsecondary institutions accredited by the North Central Association. An examination of this survey shows:

1. A large number of students served by off-campus programs are associated with long-established extension and continuing education activities of major universities.

2. Substantial numbers of students in off-campus programs are campus-based students participating in programs operated by their home institutions (such as study abroad programs and similar educational programs directed toward broadening the educational oopportunities of "conventional" students).

3. The bulk of the remaining off-campus programs are conducted on military bases primarily for military personnel.

It is clear that these programs have played -- and in our opinion should continue to play -- an important role in extending and enlarging educational opportunity for many persons.

Off-campus programs are examined in the course of North Central's comprehensive evaluation of institutions for initial or continued accreditation. The results of a number of such examinations show that, in general, the off-campus programs of accredited institutions are of at least acceptable educational quality, and some are of excellent quality.

We know, from our examinations, that some off-campus programs of accredited institutions have failed to provide educational work of the desired quality. But a comprehensive view of all off-campus programs shows that those that are of poor quality are a small minority. When our examinations have discovered such programs, the institutions have uniformly sought to make improvements with the assistance, advice, and

continued evaluation of the Commission. When needed improvements have not been possible the programs have been closed.

In light of these facts, it seems to us short-sighted at best to seek to impose heavily restrictive regulations that would make it difficult to offer off-campus programs. Such regulations would place a burden on all off-campus programs, the many good ones and the few poor ones alike. The cost of such restrictions would be a diminishing of the educational opportunities provided by off-campus programs, because they would make offering such programs unattractive. This would be a heavy cost to society, the development of which needs additional educational opportunities for individuals to improve themselves by learning new skills, increasing specialized knowledge, and -- perhaps most of all -- by raising their levels of general education. It is obvious that individuals, interested in and concerned about their educations, would also lose from unnecessary restrictions on educational opportunity.

We believe that most persons seeking additional education are committed to obtaining the best education available to them. Thus, we think that the best means to diminish the already small number of poor quality programs is to increase the number of good quality programs. The growth of off-campus programs -- which seek to serve persons who for many reasons cannot be served on campuses -- shows that there is a need for such programs. We urge our institutions to recognize this need and to seek to meet it within the scope of their various missions. The need is for programs of high quality provided by institutions of substantial educational resources.

We believe that the policies and procedures already in place in the work of this Commission represent ways in which off-campus programs of poor quality are discouraged without restricting the continued existence and growth of good quality programs. These policies and procedures seem to us consistent with those recently recommended by the executives of the regional accrediting associations. Included in these policies and procedures are the following:

1. The regular examination of off-campus programs as a part of our comprehensive evaluations of all institutions accredited by us. In recent years such examinations have taken our visiting teams throughout the United States, as visits have been made to many off-campus sites.

2. Insistence, through one of our criteria of eligibility, that an institution meet all the legal requirements imposed for offering courses and credits in each state in which it operates.

3. Cooperation among the several regional accrediting associations, so that off-campus sites located outside the home region of an institution are examined by teams including evaluators from several regions. In recent years we have, following this policy, had on North Central teams evaluators from all of the other regions.

4. Regarding the establishment of a program of off-campus education as an indication of possible substantive change within an institution. Under our substantive change policy, such a change is a signal for a comprehensive examination of the institution, which must be completed, with action approving the change, before the change can be instituted.

5. Requiring more frequent evaluations of institutions experiencing rapid change. Our experience is that many off-campus programs, particularly those conducted far from the home campus, experience many and frequent changes as institutions seek new ways to monitor and guarantee educational quality. In some cases we have provided partial or complete institutional evaluations in successive years for institutions exhibiting such rapidity of change as a result of their off-campus operations.

6. Improvement of regular reporting by institutions to the Commission offices. Our institutional annual reports now ask that institutions conducting off-campus activities outside their home states provide the Commission with a list of all out-of-state sites. Staff monitoring of these reports is a way of our being continually apprised of changes and developments within the institutions.

7. The Commission has recommended to institutions at their request persons to provide consulting assistance in the development and evaluation of off-campus programs. While such consultation is apart from the regular evaluative processes of the Commission, it is a valuable service to our affiliated institutions, and the reports of the Commission recommended consultants are available to our visiting teams.

We are skeptical that an elaborate procedure requiring special and lengthy prior approvals for off-campus programs would be effective in reducing programs of poor quality. We are certain that such a procedure would inhibit institutions concerned with high educational quality in expanding or initiating off-campus programs. Experience shows clearly that regulations do not prevent abuses: those determined to abuse find ways to circumvent or ignore regulations. Prevention of abuse in education lies in developing within each institution a concern for quality and an awareness of the continuous attention needed to attain high quality. We believe that our program of self-study, which provides the opportunity and incentive for each institution to evaluate itself, contributes greatly to developing such concern and awareness.

And we believe that our monitoring of institutions provides a reasonable chance that those few cases in which poor quality has been allowed to exist will be discovered and that corrective action will be initiated.

Our activities are of course confined to institutions that have voluntarily sought affiliation with this Commission. Many documented cases of programs of poor quality have involved unaccredited institutions which no accrediting association can influence. We believe that each of the states should have in place appropriate statutes and regulations providing a basic level of protection to its citizens against educational abuse. We stand ready to assist any state considering the adoption of such statutes and regulations. In a number of states in the North Central region cooperation between the state agencies and our staff has assisted the work of both in protecting the public interest and promoting educational quality. Such cooperation is not only effective, but also is provided at minimum cost to the public.

We urge our institutions to give careful thought to the need and demand for off-campus programs and to seek to maintain high quality in such programs. We encourage all who believe that they know of programs of poor quality to communicate that concern to our staff, who can initiate examination and corrective action if it is warranted. Our concern is for high educational quality, which can best be attained not by prior restraint, but by encouraging institutions of integrity to create and improve programs in an atmosphere of freedom and support.

July 24, 1978

SECTION B

Revised 6/7/78

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
INSTITUTIONAL SUMMARY SHEET

INSTITUTION: COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Columbia, MO 65201

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Dr. Bruce Kelly, President (314) 449-0531

STATE COORDINATING/ GOVERNING OR OTHER RELATED AGENCY: not applicable

INSTITUTIONAL SUMMARY: Private, coeducational institution, accredited at the bachelor's degree level, offering liberal arts, general, and teacher preparatory programs
Enrollment: 1,134 at Columbia campus
1,800 at Extended Studies Division sites

TYPE OF EVALUATION: a comprehensive evaluation of Columbia College, including its Extended Studies Division, for continued accreditation at the bachelor's degree level

EVALUATION FEE: cost + $1,000

NCA STAFF: Dr. Patricia Thrash
(800) 323-6528
(312) 864-0740

EVALUATION PERIOD: Spring 1978

REPORT DUE: within six weeks after evaluation

LENGTH OF VISIT: sequential--see attached evaluation schedule

DATE OF VISIT:

Phase I: April 2-6, 1978

The initial visit to the Columbia, Missouri, Campus by the total team. The team will evaluate the programs on the main campus and will test the Basic Site Data Forms developed for the Extended Studies Division at sites within two hours of the campus:

-the Columbia civilian site
-Fort Leonard Wood, MO, military site
-St. Louis military sites

Phase Two: April, May, 1978

Site visits will be made by two-person teams to selected Extended Studies Division sites in each of the accrediting regions in which Columbia offers its ESD programs: North Central, Southern, Western, Northwest, and Middle States. (See attached evaluation schedule for list of sites to be visited)

Phase Three: June 1-2, 1978

The total team will reconvene at Columbia College, Missouri, for its final visit for the purpose of confirming findings and drafting the final report.

Commission Action: July 22-23, 1978

-see other side for evaluation team members-

EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS FROM THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION:

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OBSERVER OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS:

Mr. Joe Hardman
College Eligibility Section
Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation
Bureau of Higher Education
U. S. Office of Education
Washington, D. C. 20202
202/245-2944

(In addition, Columbia officials may invite a representative of the Missouri Department of Higher Education to participate as an observer of the evaluation process.)

Attachment

6/7/78

EVALUATION SCHEDULE FOR COLUMBIA COLLEGE (MISSOURI)

SPRING 1978

PHASE I: APRIL 2-6, 1978

INITIAL VISIT TO COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, CAMPUS AND NEARBY EXTENDED CAMPUS SITES

Sunday, April 2

+team arrives; orientation session Sunday evening

Monday, April 3

+team meets with president and officers

-evaluation of Columbia, MO, campus
-team meets, evening

Tuesday, April 4

+various team members disperse to extended campus sites

-four to St. Louis
--two to Lambert Field, MO — Roth (CH), Crump
--two to Granite City, IL — Cantelon (CH), Burcaw

-two to Fort Leonard Wood, MO — Warrick (CH), O'Connell
--military program (progress since last visit)

-others to Columbia Civilian Program on Campus (progress since last visit) — Thiede (CH), Padgett

Wednesday, April 5

+team reconvenes at Columbia, MO

-draft reports of site visits
-suggest revisions in site instrument
-prepare summary of findings

Thursday, April 6

+Exit Interview

-Initial Impressions/Tentative Findings, and Suggestions for Remaining Phases of the Visit

+Prepare report on site (or immediately thereafter)

Revised 9/27/78 -more-

PHASE II: APRIL, MAY, 1978--VISITS TO SELECTED EXTENDED CAMPUS SITES

General format will be two-person teams to two-three sites in each geographical region for two-three nights.

(Military programs available April 10-29; Civilian programs available April 10-15, May 8-31)

| LOCATION | SITE TEAM | DATE OF VISIT |
|---|---|---|
| NORTH CENTRAL SITES | | |
| +Denver, CO, Civilian Program | Roth (CH), Padgett | April 17 |
| +Kansas City National Guard Armory -active duty off-base | Warrick (CH), Thiede | May 9-10 |
| +Kansas City Civilian Program | Warrick (CH), Thiede | May 9-10 |
| NORTHWEST SITES | | |
| +Seattle Civilian Program (revisit) | Cantelon (CH), Burcaw | April 30-May 1 |
| +Fort Lewis, WA (active duty/on-base) | Cantelon (CH), Burcaw | May 2 |
| +Fort Lawton, WA (active duty/on-base) -sub-post of Ft. Lewis | Cantelon (CH), Burcaw | May 1 |
| WESTERN SITES | | |
| +San Francisco-3 military sites -all active duty/on-base 1) Treasure Island; 2) Petaluma; 3) Oakland Army Base | Warrick (CH), O'Connell | April 17-19 |
| MIDDLE STATES SITES | | |
| +Hyattsville, MD (military) -active duty/off-base | Roth (CH), Crump | May 1 |
| +Hancock Field, NY (military) -active duty/on-base | Roth (CH), Crump | May 2 |
| SOUTHERN STATES SITES | | |
| +Miami, FL, Military Base -active duty/off-base | Thiede (CH), Padgett | April 24 |
| +Orlando Naval Training Center, FL -active duty/on-base (large; other institutions there) | Thiede (CH), Padgett | April 25 |

PHASE III: June 1-2, 1978--FINAL VISIT TO COLUMBIA COLLEGE, MO, CAMPUS

+Total team reconvenes for final visit
- -confirm findings
- -draft final report

+Exit Interview
- -accrediting recommendation

COMMISSION ACTION: JULY 22-23, 1978

Revised 9/27/78

NCA

North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Institutions
of Higher Education

1221 University Avenue
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# EVALUATION DESIGN FOR COLUMBIA COLLEGE (MISSOURI)

Spring 1978

The elements of this evaluation design result from a number of discussions between Columbia College officials and Commission staff.

Purpose of the evaluation. This is an evaluation of the total institution, including the Extended Studies Division, for continued accreditation at the bachelor's degree level. Because the evaluation encompasses the total institution in terms of its progress since the time of the last evaluation, the team will be concerned about the following elements:

- -that the institution has a clearly-defined mission which is appropriate to the educational tasks it is performing;
- -that the institution has the resources to carry out the mission which it has defined for itself, including its mission of offering programs at extended campus sites;
- -that the institution has responded to concerns identified by evaluation teams which visited the institution in 1973, 1976, and 1977;
- -that appropriate assessment procedures are in place and that, in the evaluation of the Extended Studies Division programs, these elements are particularly important:
  - --quality of work offered;
  - --relation of program to Columbia College degree requirements;
  - --general administration and quality control;
  - --comparability of work on campus and at extended sites.

Evaluation team competencies. Evaluation team members will be selected from the North Central Association region and the other accrediting regions in which ESD programs are offered - Southern, Western, Northwest, and Middle States. Competencies of team members should include the following:

- -ability to assess undergraduate programs both on campus and at ESD sites and to make comparisons concerning the quality of on campus and off campus programs;
- -knowledge concerning both the traditional liberal arts institution and the emerging institution with extended campus programs;
- -knowledge about governance, fiscal planning, budgeting, decision-making, and competency-assessment (including the validation of experiential learning).

Evaluation fee. The fee for the evaluation visit will be actual costs plus $1,000. Patricia Thrash will invite the various regional officers to suggest evaluators to serve on the team. These evaluators will be paid directly by the North Central Association according to its fee standards for evaluators.

Evaluation visit design. This is a comprehensive evaluation, sequential in nature, of Columbia College, including its Extended Studies Division. The visit is divided into three phases:

Phase One: the initial visit to the Columbia, Missouri, campus by the total team on April 3-7, 1978. The team will evaluate the programs on the main campus and will test the Basic Site Data Forms developed for the Extended Studies Division at sites within two hours of the campus:

-the Columbia civilian site
-Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, military site
-St. Louis military sites

At this time the team will determine whether revision should be made in the site instrument. The Exit Interview will provide an opportunity for the team members and institutional representatives to discuss findings, ask questions, and suggest next steps. Following the visit, the team will prepare a draft report of Initial Impressions, Tentative Findings, and Suggestions for Remaining Phases of the Visit.

Phase Two: April, May, 1978

(Military programs available April 10-29; Civilian programs available April 10-15, May 8-31)

Site visits will be made by two-person teams to selected ESD sites in each of the accrediting regions in which Columbia offers its ESD programs: North Central, Southern, Western, Northwest, and Middle States. Basic Site Data Forms have been designed to insure comparability of information. Team members will receive the Basic Site Data Forms prepared by the sites before the visits. Following the visits the teams will prepare brief reports according to an agreed-upon format. The Basic Site Data Forms will serve as attachments to the site reports.

Sites to be visited will be determined by team chairperson Wilson Thiede and Patricia Thrash, in consultation with President Bruce Kelly. (Avoid 1st and last weeks of minimester)

Phase Three: May or June, 1978

The total team will reconvene at Columbia College, Missouri, for its final visit for the purpose of confirming findings and drafting the final report. The team, institutional representatives, and Patricia Thrash of the Commission staff will have received the tentative reports from Phase One and Phase Two in advance of the Phase Three visit. The team's accrediting recommendation will be given at the Exit Interview. Following the Exit Interview, the chairperson and the team will prepare the draft report. After corrections of errors of fact by the institutional representatives, the team chairperson will prepare the final report of the visit.

Commission action. Commission accrediting action is anticipated at the Summer Meeting of the Commission scheduled for July 22-23, 1978, at the O'Hare Hilton in Chicago.

Participation in the process. In addition to the evaluation team members, Columbia officials will invite a representative of the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Mr. Joe Hardman of the USOE/DEAE Bureau of Higher Education, College Eligibility Section, to participate as observers of the evaluation process.

Materials for the evaluation team. See attached list of materials sent to the evaluation team by the Commission and the institution.

Patricia A. Thrash
Associate Director
(Evanston)

September 27, 1978 (Revised)

Attachment

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
820 Davis Street Evanston, IL 60201 (312) 864-0740 (800) 323-6528

MATERIALS FOR THE COLUMBIA COLLEGE (MISSOURI) EVALUATION TEAM

March 2, 1978

MATERIALS PREPARED FOR THE SPRING 1978 EVALUATION OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE

1. Institutional Summary Sheet with attached Evaluation Schedule (attached to letter)
2. Notes of a Meeting with Columbia College (Missouri) Representatives, January 12, 1978
3. Evaluation Design for Columbia College (Missouri)
4. Procedures for Evaluation of Extended Studies Division Sites of Columbia College (Missouri)
5. Columbia College (Missouri) Basic Site Data Forms

GENERAL MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICES

MATERIALS TO CHAIRPERSON ONLY:

1. Team Chairperson's Evaluation of Associate Members
2. Nominations for Consultant-Evaluator Associate Program

MATERIALS TO ENTIRE TEAM:

1. Request for Travel Reimbursement forms (5)
2. Handbook on Accreditation
3. Changes Affecting the Accredited or Candidate Status of an Institution, draft statement of July 1977 (to replace material on substantive change currently on page 38 of the Handbook on Accreditation)
4. Draft Statement on Affiliation of Institutions with the Commission, September 10, 1977
5. Comments and Suggestions for Subsequent NCA Review of Columbia College ESD Programs, paper prepared by William Hazard and Barbara Mickey
6. Comments on NCA Evaluation Procedures Non-traditional, Geographically-Dispersed College Programs, paper prepared by William Hazard and Barbara Mickey
7. Patricia A. Thrash, "Nontraditional Institutions and Programs: A Challenge for the Accreditation Process," NCA Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 3, Winter 1975, pages 321-329
8. Patricia A. Thrash, "Evaluation of Nontraditional Learning Forms: The Extended Campus Program," NCA Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2, Fall 1976, pages 280-287
9. Terrence J. MacTaggart, "New Consumers in Higher Education: Extended Programs for Military Students," NCA Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2, Fall 1976, pages 288-295
10. H. Victor Baldi, "External Degree Programs: In Search of New Definitions for Quality," NCA Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2, Fall 1976, pages 275-279

-more-

MATERIALS FROM THE INSTITUTIONS FILE IN THE COMMISSION OFFICES:

1. History Sheet
2. Institutional Annual Report
3. Accreditation Status of Columbia College (Missouri) with attached list of Extended Studies Division Sites
4. Columbia College Extended Studies Weekly Report dated February 25, 1978 (sent as an example of the weekly reports made to the Commission offices)
5. Report of a Visit dated May 2-4, 1973; Institutional Responses dated June 8, June 14, June 29; Recommendation/Action Sheet from Summer Meeting 1973; related Action Letter dated July 30, 1973
6. Report of a Consultant Visit by George Rainsford dated December 9-11, 1974
7. Report of a Consultant Visit by Robert Ray dated October 13-15, 1975
8. Report of a Consultant Visit by George Rainsford dated January 11-13, 1976
9. Report of a Visit dated January 26-28, 1976; Institutional Response dated April 1, 1976; Recommendation/Action Sheet from Annual Meeting 1976; related Action Letter dated April 9, 1976
10. Report of an Evaluation Focused on the Extended Studies Division dated July, 1976-February, 1977; Supplement to Report from William Hazard dated April 9, 1977; Institutional Response dated April 1, 1977; related Action Letter dated April 18, 1977 with attached Report of Review Committee from Annual Meeting 1977

MATERIALS PREPARED BY COLUMBIA COLLEGE FOR THE EVALUATION
(mailed from the Commission offices at the request of the institution)

1. Self-Study Report/Abstract
2. Basic Institutional Data Forms
3. Institutional Catalog
4. Extended Studies Division Degree Completion Bulletin, Columbia College, 1977-78
5. Faculty and Student Handbooks

3/2/78

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# PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION OF EXTENDED STUDIES DIVISION SITES OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE (MISSOURI)

These procedures are designed so that the information about the sites to be visited is supplied by Columbia College for the site team in advance of the visit. Instead of using an instrument at the site, the team will validate the information provided by the institution in the Basic Site Data Forms and will prepare a report covering specified areas. The use of a standard format for the site team report, with the Basic Site Data Forms as an attachment, will provide comparable data for the sites visited.

Revised September 27, 1978

Evaluation of Extended Studies Division site programs of Columbia College

These elements are important in evaluation of the extended site programs:

1. quality of work offered
2. relation of program to Columbia College degree requirements
3. general administration and quality control
4. comparability of work on campus and at extended campus sites.

Columbia officials are asked to supply information on the Basic Site Data Forms (attached). These forms are designed to give the institution an opportunity to provide basic data and program assessment for the team in advance of the site visit. Assessment of the information provided is essential, as are plans for responding to concerns identified. Here are examples of evidence which might be offered under each of the headings indicated:

1. quality of work offered:

   +syllabi
   +tests
   +grade distribution
   +faculty evaluation by students
   +student projects, reports

2. relation of program to Columbia College degree requirements:

   +final transcripts (samples) (home site)
   +summary of GPA's on graduates
   +transfer credit and experiential learning credit given (range and per cent; mean)

3. general administration and quality control:

   +profile of students admitted/graduated (single term)
   +profile of faculty
   +student products
   +facilities/learning resources
   +per cent of students admitted who leave program or are dismissed; per cent who complete program; samples of good and poor student products (papers, tests, etc.).

4. evidence that the program as it operates at the site provides an adequate education and is comparable to the program offered on the Columbia campus.

   This is the "bottom line" assessment to be offered by the institution and to be validated by the site team.

Responsibilities of the on-site evaluation team

The charge to the evaluation team visiting the Extended Studies Division of Columbia College is to evaluate the quality of work offered, to determine the relation of the program to Columbia College degree requirements, to assess general administration and quality control procedures, and to judge whether the program as it operates at the site is adequate and is comparable to the programs offered on the Columbia campus.

The evaluation team has three basic tasks. The first is to verify the data and to validate the assessment provided by site personnel on the Basic Site Data Forms through meetings with the site program coordinator, faculty members, and students. The second task is to collect independent data on the elements previously cited (quality of work offered, relation of program to Columbia College degree requirements, general administration and quality control, and adequacy/comparability of the program). The third task is to evaluate the information and to write a report of the on-site visit in brief narrative form, using the following format:

1. introduction: brief description of site visited and procedures followed

2. quality of work offered (validation and assessment of course, student, faculty data)

3. relation of program to Columbia College degree requirements (validation and assessment of course, student, and faculty data)

4. general administration and quality control (validation and assessment of data from site program coordinator, faculty)

5. statement of the team's judgment whether the program as it operates at the site provides an adequate education and is comparable to the program offered on the Columbia campus

6. attachment of the Basic Site Data Forms as an appendix to the report

The cover sheet of the report should read as follows:

Report of a Visit to

(name, location of site)

An Extended Studies Division Site of Columbia College (Missouri)

on

(dates of visit)

by

A North Central Association Evaluation Team

(list chairperson and team member(s)--
name, title, institution)

Institutional materials for the evaluation visit

1. these materials which team members will receive should be reviewed before the initial visit to Columbia College (Phase One)

   +Columbia College Self-Study Report/Abstract
   +Basic Institutional Data Forms
   +Institutional Catalogs
   +Faculty and Student Handbooks

2. these materials should be available to the appropriate team members either during the Phase I visit or well in advance of the visit to the site:

   +Basic Site Data Forms
   +course descriptions, course outlines, and competencies for courses available on the evening of the site visit

3. these materials should be available on site:

   +all faculty files (including vitae)
   +sample transcripts for graduates of the last year or two
   +sample tests, quizzes, etc. used by faculty
   +sample "work products" of students

Procedures for the visit

1. The site team chairperson should make final arrangements for the team visit with President Bruce Kelly. Dr. Kelly or his designate will coordinate arrangements with the chairperson and team member(s).

2. Team members should plan to arrive at the site by noon of the day when evening classes are to be visited. Departure plans can be made for late morning or noon of the day following the visit.

3. The site team chairperson should forward copies of the report of the site visit to (1) President Kelly, (2) Dr. Thiede, and (3) Dr. Thrash for review. Correction of errors of fact should be sent to the site team chairperson and to Dr. Thiede, who has the responsibility for correcting errors of fact for the final total team report.

4. Columbia College officials and all members of the team who made the initial visit to the Columbia campus on April 3-7, 1978, are to receive copies of the Initial Team Report and copies of the reports of each site visit in advance of the final team meeting on the Columbia campus.

Revised 9/27/78

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COLUMBIA COLLEGE (MISSOURI)

## BASIC SITE DATA FORMS

THE FORMS ATTACHED ARE DESIGNED TO GIVE THE INSTITUTION AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE BASIC DATA AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FOR THE TEAM IN ADVANCE OF THE SITE VISIT.

THE DATA FORMS ARE ORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

PART ONE: COURSE DATA

PART TWO: DATA FROM THE SITE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

PART THREE: DATA FROM FACULTY MEMBERS (THIS SHEET SHOULD BE REPRODUCED SO THAT EACH FACULTY MEMBER FILLS OUT A SHEET)

PART FOUR: STUDENT DATA

---

## BASIC SITE DATA

A. Site location (indicate name, address, military or civilian site):

B. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the following persons:

1. Site coordinator:

2. Education service officer:

Evaluation team members: Date of visit:

Basic Site Data Forms - Page Two

PART ONE: BASIC COURSE DATA

A. Basic course data. Provide the following information for all courses offered this term:*

| Course number | Title | Instructor's name | Time course meets | Date course begins | Date course ends | Number enrolled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

B. Description of classroom facilities. Provide brief description of location, physical characteristics, adequacy of space, equipment, facilities, library resources, etc.:





*As an attachment, please provide a listing of all courses offered at this site by term since the establishment of the program and the total number of students enrolled for each term.

PART TWO: DATA FROM SITE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

A. What are your principal duties?

B. What role or responsibility do you have in:

1. Organizing and scheduling courses on your site?

2. Monitoring, assessing, or evaluating instruction?

3. Advising students?

4. Working with base education officer?

C. Describe the nature and frequency of your communications with Columbia College officials at the home campus, commenting specifically on:

1. Written reports to Extended Studies Division:

2. Training programs for faculty:

3. Other:

D. From your perspective, what are the program's greatest...

1. Strengths?

2. Needs?

E. What are your plans to respond to the needs you have identified?

PART THREE: DATA FROM FACULTY MEMBERS

PLEASE DUPLICATE THIS SHEET AT THE SITE SO THAT EACH INSTRUCTOR TEACHING THIS TERM MAY PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED ON BOTH SIDES.

Name:

Academic Field:

1. Prior relevant experience:

2. Prior relevant training and date of training:

3. Evidence of scholarly activity:

4. How do you remain current with the theory and practice in your field?

5. Instructional styles, modes, or methods used in the course:

6. Is the ESD program in the process of developing and implementing competencies for this course? Yes____No____ If yes, describe their utility and adequacy.

7. What kinds of evaluation of student progress are the basis for assigning grades in your classes? (e.g., quiz, test, papers, etc.)

8. Comment on how you feel about the responsibility of screening students in and out of the program by your grading policies?

9. Materials (text, supplemental, etc.) used or available to students?

-over-

Data from Faculty Members (continued)

10. Describe the nature and frequency of your communications with the site coordinator and Columbia College officials:

11. How do you deal with class absences and missed class work?

12. From your perspective, what quality control procedures are used in the program?

13. Describe the utility of faculty meetings and/or workshops which you attend:

14. Describe ways in which your classroom performance is evaluated. Do these techniques provide, in your judgment, an accurate and helpful appraisal of your performance?

15. From your perspective, what are the program's greatest...

    a. Strengths?

    b. Needs for further development?

16. Additional comments:

PART SIX: STUDENT DATA (five most recent minimesters) (indicate date)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONTINUING STUDENTS | | | | | |
| NEWLY ADMITTED STUDENTS | | | | | |
| TOTAL ENROLLMENT | | | | | |
| NUMBER OF STUDENTS: IN GOOD STANDING | | | | | |
| ON WARNING | | | | | |
| ON PROBATION | | | | | |
| WITHDRAWN | | | | | |
| SUSPENDED | | | | | |
| NUMBER OF STUDENTS GRADUATED | | | | | |
| GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES (see attached sheet) | | | | | |
| MEAN NUMBER OF CREDITS TRANSFERRED BY EACH GRADUATE | | | | | |
| MEAN NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION CREDITS TRANSFERRED BY EACH GRADUATE | | | | | |
| MEAN NUMBER OF EXPERIENTIAL CREDITS OF GRADUATES | | | | | |
| MEAN NUMBER OF COLUMBIA CREDITS OF GRADUATES | | | | | |

SECTION F

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY QUESTIONS

A series of questions prepared by the institution for the sequential evaluation of Central Michigan University in 1978-79 to assist evaluators in their validation of the information provided in the Basic Site Data Forms.

I. Site location. Adequacy of the location: physical space, equipment, classroom facilities, library resources, etc.

II. Courses. Are the courses offered as indicated?

III. Program Manager. General observations or comments relative to program operations and quality control as well as program manager's familiarity with policies and procedures prescribed by the College.

IV. Center representatives. General observations relative to program operations and quality control and the center representative's familiarity with policies and procedures prescribed by the College.

V. Academic advisers. General observations relative to program operations and quality control and the adviser's familiarity with policies and procedures prescribed by the College.

VI. Faculty members. General observations on the adequacy of the faculty and their familiarity with policies and procedures prescribed by the College.

A. Classroom observations:

1. evidence of instructor's preparation for the class session observed.

2. instructional styles, modes, or methods observed.

3. quality of work offered.

4. instructor/student interaction.

5. books and other materials used by students during class.

VII. Students.

A. Group interview data:

1. Are the required and recommended materials for the course reasonably available to students?

2. What are the principal reasons for students' enrolling in this course?

3. What is student opinion about:

   a. the overall quality of the program offered by the College (strengths, concerns)
   b. the quality of instruction
   c. the quality and availability of academic advisement
   d. the procedures used by the College for end-of-course evaluations
   e. availability of books and other resources for students
   f. procedures for making up missed class sessions
   g. type and level of communications with the College, both on site and with the main campus
   h. responsiveness of the College in resolving any problems students may have encountered
   i. the effect, if any, of the scheduling format sequence on the student's ability to complete the requirements of the course
   j. availability of learning resources (library, etc.)

B. Classroom observations:

1. Student response, participation, and interaction in the class session.

2. Evidence of student preparation for the class session.

3. General observations and comments on the students and the class session(s) observed.

VIII. Records.

A. Are the records consistent and complete?

B. Are they kept in the manner prescribed by the policies and procedures of the college?

C. Are the records secure, and is confidentiality maintained?

D. Are the end-of-course evaluations prescribed by the college used

1. to provide the instructor with an evaluation and an opportunity to improve performance

2. to review and revise courses?

E. Examination of student work products

1. projects

2. reports

9/27/78

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# ACCREDITATION STATUS OF WEBSTER COLLEGE

This statement has been prepared by the Commission and the institution as a response to inquiries made of the office of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools regarding the accreditation status of Webster College, St. Louis, Missouri:

Webster College is accredited at the master's degree level. The college offers baccalaureate and master's degrees. Baccalaureate degrees currently offered include the A.B., B.Mus., B.Mus.Ed., B.F.A.; master's degrees include the Master of Arts/Individualized (MA/I), the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), the Master of Music (M.M.), and the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Theatre Arts. The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Institutions of Higher Education is the regional accrediting commission responsible for postsecondary accreditation in a nineteen-state region, including Missouri, where Webster College is chartered as an institution of higher education.

During the academic year 1977-78, a comprehensive evaluation of Webster College was scheduled to determine the college's readiness to move to a higher degree level. As a part of the comprehensive evaluation, which was sequential in nature, a select and representative sample of Webster's extended sites at which the college offers its master's level programs were included. A list of the extended sites at which Webster College currently offers the Master of Arts degree in Individualized Studies (MA/I) and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) is attached.

As a result of the evaluation, the Executive Board of the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action on April 11, 1978:

that accreditation be continued at the master's degree-granting level, with that accreditation to include the extended campus program;

that a comprehensive evaluation be scheduled in ten years, 1987-88.

The action of the Board was based on the materials provided by the institution, the report and recommendation of the visitng team, and the recommendations of the Review Committee.

Additional inquiries may be directed to Dr. Patricia Thrash, Associate Director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 820 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201, or to the institution: Dr. Leigh Gerdine, President, Webster College, 470 East Lockwood, St. Louis, Missouri 63119, (314) 968-0500.

Attachment

8/30/78

# WEBSTER COLLEGE

470 East Lockwood/St. Louis, Mo. 63119/(314) 968-0500

## WEBSTER COLLEGE EXTENDED CAMPUS PROGRAMS

MA/I Sites Within North Central Association

| State | Location | Name |
|---|---|---|
| Missouri | 470 E. Lockwood<br>St. Louis, MO. 63119<br>James Groetsch, Adm. Assistant<br>968-0500, Ext. 416 | Webster College On Campus |
| Missouri | 326 N. Broadway<br>St. Louis, Mo. 63102<br>Joseph F. Olszewski, Adm. Assistant<br>968-0500, Ext. 416 | Webster College Downtown Campus |
| Missouri | Anheuser Busch<br>721 Pestalozzi<br>St. Louis, MO. 63118<br>Joseph F. Olszewski, Adm. Assistant<br>968-0500, Ext. 416 | Webster College - Anheuser Busch |
| Missouri | Jefferson Barracks<br>25 Sherman<br>St. Louis, MO. 63125<br>Joseph F. Olszewski, Adm. Assistant<br>968-0500, Ext. 416 | Webster College - Jefferson Barracks |
| Missouri | TSARCOM<br>Attention: DESTS-RCT<br>4300 Goodfellow<br>St. Louis, MO. 63120<br>Joseph F. Olszewski, Adm. Assistant<br>968-0500, Ext.416 | Webster College - TSARCOM |
| Missouri | RC/PAC<br>9700 Page Ave.<br>St. Louis, MO. 63132<br>Joseph F. Olszewski, Adm. Assistant<br>968-0500, Ext. 416 | Webster College - RC/PAC |
| Missouri | Webster College Base Education<br>Bldg. 104 - Room 102<br>Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO 64030<br>Leslie Levin, Coordinator<br>816-331-8177 | Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Missouri | Webster College Office<br>Building 499<br>Ft. Leonard Wood, MO 65473<br>Ron Stone - Coordinator<br>314-368-4909 | Fort Leonard Wood |
| Arkansas | Education Services Office<br>P. O. Box 1143<br>Jacksonville, Ark. 72076<br>Bert Love - Coordinator<br>501-988-5331 | Little Rock Air Force Base |
| Colorado | Fitzsimons Army Medical Center<br>Building 620<br>Denver, Colorado 80240<br>Mel Stokes, Coordinator<br>303-341-8977<br>Autovon No. 943-8977 | Fitzsimons Army Medical Center |
| Colorado | Education Office<br>46 Aero Space Defense Wing, STOP 45<br>Peterson AFB, Colorado 80914<br>Barbara Barrett Holley, - Coordinator<br>303-574-7562 | Peterson Air Force Base |
| Illinois | Army Education Center<br>Bradley Loop<br>Ft. Sheridan, Ill. 60037<br>Sandy Ramey - Coordinator<br>312-432-4940 | (1) Great Lakes Naval Hosp. School<br>(2) Fort Sheridan |
| Illinois | 375 ABG-Education Office<br>DPT/STOP 229<br>Scott AFB, Illinois 62225<br>Sue Richardson - Coordinator<br>618-746-4747 | Scott Air Force Base |
| Kansas | Education Office<br>381 CSG/DPE<br>McConnell AFB, Kansas 67221<br>Cathryn Carter - Coordinator<br>316-686-6841 | McConnell Air Force Base |
| New Mexico | 1606 Air Base Wing DPT<br>Kirtland AFB, New Mexico 87117<br>Caroline Hansen - Coordinator<br>505/255-3645 | Kirtland AFB |
| Oklahoma | Base Education Center/Stop 54<br>Altus AFB, Okla. 73521<br>Tamra Paolillo - Coordinator<br>405-477-0359<br>Autovon No. 866-6246 | Altus Air Force Base |

MAT Sites Within North Central Association

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Missouri | 12411 Wornall Road<br>Kansas City, MO 64145<br>Marge Tansley, Director<br>816-942-4050 | Webster College |
| Missouri | Pan Educational Institute<br>4327½ Troost Ave.<br>Kansas City, Mo. 64110<br>Joan Williams, Director<br>816-531-6527 | Webster College |

MA/I Sites Within Southern Association

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Louisiana | Education Office<br>England AFB<br>Alexandria, Louisiana 71301<br>Linda McKinney - Coordinator<br>318-448-5618, Ext. 5231 | England Air Force Base |
| North Carolina | Education Services<br>DPT Webster College<br>Pope AFB, North Carolina 28308<br>Anita Randall - Coord.<br>919-497-2424<br>Autovon Nos. 486-4598 or 486-4679 | Pope Air Force Base |
| South Carolina | Education Office<br>437 ABG/DPT<br>Charleston AFB, S.C. 29404<br>Mary Ann Miller - Coordinator<br>803-744-6892 | Charleston Naval Station |
| South Carolina | Education Office<br>437 ABG/DPT<br>Charleston, AFB, S.C. 29404<br>Mary Ann Miller - Coordinator<br>803-744-8488 | Charleston Air Force Base |
| South Carolina | Education Services Office<br>354 CSG/DPE<br>Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C. 29577<br>Ann Scoggins - Coordinator<br>803-238-5831 | Myrtle Beach Air Force Base |
| Texas | Webster College Office<br>Building 129 NAS<br>Corpus Christi, TX 78419<br>Marsha Reed - Coordinator<br>512-937-5775 | (1) Corpus Christi Naval Air Station<br>(2) Beeville Naval Air Station<br>(3) Kingsville Naval Air Station |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Texas | P.O. Box 6037<br>Ft. Bliss, Texas 79906<br>June Amundson - Coordinator<br>915-568-6426 | Fort Bliss |
| Texas | Base Education Office<br>Building 2248<br>Ft. Sam Houston, Texas 78234<br>Grace Howard - Coordinator<br>512-534-0671 (Brooks AFB)<br>512-226-3373 (Ft. Sam Houston) | (1) Brooks Air Force Base<br>(2) Fort Sam Houston |
| Texas | Education Service Office<br>47th FTW/DPT (in Del Rio, Texas)<br>Laughlin AFB, Texas 78840<br>Lisa Smith - Coordinator<br>512-298-3686<br>Autovon No. 732-2553 | Laughlin Air Force Base |

MA/I Sites Within Western Association

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| California | Webster College<br>MCAS (H) Education Office<br>Santa Ana, California 92710<br>Allen C. Meadors, Coordinator<br>714/552-0634 | Marine Corps Air Station<br>(Helicopter) Santa Ana |

OTHER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Iceland | Navy Campus for Achievement<br>Box 15 USNS<br>FPO New York 09571<br>Patricia Sager - Coordinator<br>Autovon No. 228-0127 | Keflavik Naval Station |
| Switzerland | Dr. John Rider, Coordinator<br>Centre International Reforme<br>John Knox<br>27 Chemin des Crets de Pregny<br>CH 1218 Grand-Saconnex/Geneva<br>Switzerland<br>Tel: 98-91-71 | |

Revised as of 6/23/78

# MAI SITES

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE - #15
Tamra Paolillo - Fac. Advsr. & Coordinator
Tal Oden, Faculty Coordinator
Devone Baron, Secretary
Base Education Center/Stop 54
Altus AFB, OK 73521
w: 405/477-0359
h: 405/477-1350
Autovon No. 866-6246

CHARLESTON AFB - #18, & NB - #17
Mary Ann Miller - Coordinator
Dr. Sheila Davis, Fac. Coordinator
Robert M. Knight, Faculty Advisor
Education Office
437 ABG/DPT
Charleston AFB, South Carolina 29404
w: 803/744-8488 (AFB) M,W & F. 8:30 - 4:30
T & Th.12:30 - 4:30
w: 803/744-6892 (NB) T & Th. 9:00 - 12:00

CORPUS CHRISTI NAVAL AIR STATION - #19, #20, #21
Marsha Reed, Coordinator
Dr. Royal Mills, Facutly Coordinator
Dr. Henry A. Santana, Faculty Advisor
Jana Dove, Secretary
Roberta R. Sullivan, Secretary - Beeville
Kate Lawson, Secretary - Kingsville
Webster College Office
Building 129 NAS
Corpus Christi, Texas 78419
w: 512/937-5775
h: 512/991-0668

ENGLAND AIR FORCE BASE - #33
Linda McKinney - Coordinator
Webster College
Education Office
England AFB
Alexandria, Louisiana 71301
w: 318/448-5618 ext. 5231
h: 318/445-4261

FITZSIMONS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER - #31
Mel Stokes - Coordinator
Lawrence G. Seid, Faculty Advisor
Mary Lou Falvey, Secretary
Fitzsimons Army Medical Center
Building 620
Denver, Colorado 80240
w: 303/341-3762
w: 303/341-8977
Autovon No. 943-8977

FT. BLISS - #32
June Amundson - Coordinator
Cynthia Bonilla, Secretary
P. O. Box 6037
Ft. Bliss, Texas 79906
w: 915/568-6426
w: 915/562-4400

FT. LEONARD WOOD - #14
Ron Stone - Coordinator
Charles Taylor - Faculty Coordinator
Newell O. Payne, Faculty Advisor
Building 499
Webster College Office
Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri 65473
w: 314/368-4909

FT. SAM HOUSTON - #27
Grace Howard - Coordinator
John Yoggerst, Faculty Coordinator
Ellis Harbin, Faculty Advisor
Mary L. Hametner, Secretary - Ft. Sam Housto
Lee Schneberger, Secretary - Brooks AFB
Base Education Office
Building 2248
Ft. Sam Houston, Texas 78234
w: 512/226-3373 (Ft. Sam) 8:00 - 10:00
w: 512/534-0671 (Brooks) 10:30 - 4:00

Ft. Sheridan - #13, #25
Sandy Ramey - Coordinator
Barbara Jeanne Compton, Secretary
Army Education Center
Bradley Loop, Ft. Sheridan, IL 60037
w: 312/432-4940 (direct line)
h: 312/259-8640

KEFLAVIK NAVAL STATION, ICELAND - #36
Patricia Sager - Coordinator
Navy Campus for Achievement
Box 15 USNS
FPO New York 09571
Autovon No. 228-0127

KIRTLAND AFB - #35
Caroline Hansen - Coordinator
1606 Air Base Wing DPT
Kirtland AFB, New Mexico 87117
w: 505/255-3645



JUL 12 1978

MAI SITES (cont'd) Page Two

LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE - #26
Lisa Smith - Coordinator
John Yoggerst, Faculty Coordinator
Ellis Harbin, Faculty Advisor
Education Service Office
47th FTW/DPT
Laughlin AFB, Texas 78840
w: 512/298-3686
Autovon No. 732-2553

LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE - #11
Bert Love - Coordinator
Dr. Rodney D. Neal - Faculty Coordinator
Larry Sullivan, Faculty Advisor
Wilma Love, Secretary
Education Services Office
P. O. Box 1143
Jacksonville, Arkansas 72076
w: 501/988-5331

MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE - #30
Cathryn Carter - Coordinator
Dale Richmond, Faculty Coordinator
Mary L. Hooper, Faculty Advisor
Webster College Education Office
381 CSG/DPE
McConnell AFB, Kansas 67221
w: 316/686-6841

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION (HELICOPTER) - #37
SANTA ANA

Allen C. Meadors, Coordinator
Webster College
MCAS (H)
Education Office
Santa Ana, California 92710
w: 714/552-0634

MYRTLE BEACH AIR FORCE BASE - #28
Lynda Smith - Coordinator
Dr. Sheila Davis - Faculty Coordinator
Elliot Rubin - Faculty Advisor
Education Services Office
354 CSG/DPE
Myrtle Beach AFB, S.C. 29577
w: 803/238-5831

PETERSON AFB - #34
Barbara Barrett Holley - Coordinator
Lee Trovas, Faculty Coordinator
Darwin Mosier, Faculty Advisor
Education Office
46 Aerospace Defense Wing, STOP 45
Peterson AFB, Colorado 80914
w: 303/574-7562

POPE AIR FORCE BASE - #24
Anita Randall - Coordinator
Glen Martin, Faculty Coordinator
Kenneth Kastleman, Faculty Advisor
Trudy Thomas, Secretary
Education Services
DPT Webster College
Pope AFB, N.C. 28308
w: 919/497-2424
Autovon Nos. 486-4598 or 486-4679

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE - #10
Sue Richardson - Coordinator
Edward Leardi - Faculty Coordinator
Dr. Russ Washburn, Faculty Advisor
Betty Schamberger, Secretary
375 ABG-Education Office
DPT/STOP 229
Scott AFB, IL 62225
w: 618/256-3124 (thru Scott switchboard)
w: 618/746-4747 - direct line

WEBSTER COLLEGE AT KANSAS CITY - #23
Leslie Levin - Coordinator
David Wildman - Faculty Coordinator
Hanalee Waller, Secretary
Plaza Center Bldg, Suite 200
800 W. 47th St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64112
w: 816/331-8177

MAI ST. LOUIS SITES - Faculty Advisors

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr. Edwin Eilenstine | 966-5700 x. 324 |
| Janet Krieger | 429-3500 x. 240 |
| Dr. William Lally | 524-6228 |

MARQUETTE BUILDING
Burton Sawyer
Interoffice Mail
Eleanor Deal - Secretary
326 N. Broadway, Lobby
phone ext.: 384

TSARCOM
Hal Rushmeyer
Commander, TSARCOM
ATTN: DESTS-RCT
4300 Goodfellow
St. Louis, Missouri 63120
phone: 263-2157

RC/PAC
Virginia Embrey
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St. Louis, Missouri 63132
phone: 268-7797

APPENDIX B

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### COPA Study to Develop Evaluative Criteria for the Accreditation of Nontraditional Education

Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
Robert Kirkwood, Executive Director
Commission on Higher Education
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(215)662-5600

New England Association of Schools and Colleges
131 Middlesex Turnpike
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(617)272-6450

William J. MacLeod, Director of Evaluation
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

Daniel S. Maloney, Director of Evaluation
Commission on Vocational, Technical, Career Institutions

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Thurston E. Manning, Director
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
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(303)449-7110

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
James F. Bemis, Executive Director
Commission on Colleges
3700-B University Way, N. E.
Seattle, Washington 98105
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Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
795 Peachtree Street, N.E.
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(404)875-8011

Gordon W. Sweet
Executive Secretary
Commission on Colleges

Bob E. Childers
Executive Secretary
Commission on Occupational Education Institutions

Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Kay J. Andersen
Executive Director
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges & Universities
c/o Mills College, Box 9990
Oakland, California 94614
(415)632-5000

Robert Swenson
Executive Director
Accrediting Commission for Junior Colleges
9053 Soquel Drive
Aptos, California 95003
(408)688-7575

Coordinating Board
Texas College and University System
Kenneth H. Ashworth
Commissioner
P. O. Box 12788, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711
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# ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Commission on Accreditation of Dental
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William A. Goddard
Executive Director
National Association of Trade
& Technical Schools
2021 L Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036
(202)296-8892

APPENDIX C

ROSTER OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

April 1, 1977

MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

CAMPUS-FREE COLLEGE (Candidate)
Administrative Coordinator: Mark Cheren
Contact Person: Sue Sinnamon
1239 G Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: James W. Hall
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

ICS CENTER FOR DEGREE STUDIES (Accredited)
Director: Charles E. Miller
Contact Person: Robert Donovan, Vice President, Education
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18515

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT (Accredited)
President: Albert W. Brown
Contact Person: Peter N. Smits, Assistant to the President
Brockport, New York 14420

THOMAS A. EDISON COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: James D. Brown, Jr.
Contact Person: Dennis Smith, Dir. of Institutional Research
Trenton, New Jersey 08638

UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK -
REGENTS EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM (Accredited)
Director: Donald J. Nolan
Albany, New York 12230

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

ADL-MEI (Arthur D. Little Management Education Institute) (Accredited)
President: Joseph J. Voci
Contact Person: Ken Rogers
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

BRIDGEPORT ENGINEERING INSTITUTE (Accredited)
President: William J. Owens
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606

FRANCONIA COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: I. Ira Goldenberg
Contact Person: David Osher
Franconia, New Hampshire 03580

GODDARD COLLEGE (Accredited)
Acting President: John Hall
Contact Person: Wilfred G. Hamlin, Self-Study Director
Plainfield. Vermont 05667

SIMON'S ROCK (Accredited)
President: Samuel H. Magill
Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT (Accredited)
President: Peter P. Smith
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

THE CONNECTICUT BOARD FOR STATE ACADEMIC AWARDS (Candidate)
Executive Director: Bernard Shea
340 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06115

THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES (Candidate)
Chief Administrator: Maynard C. Heckel
Contact Person: Lew Knight, Dir. of External Degree Programs
Durham, New Hampshire 03824

THE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING (Accredited)
Director: John A. Wallace
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

(New England Association - continued)

THE VERMONT INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Candidate)
(VICI)
President: Steward LaCasce
South Burlington, Vermont 05401

Commission on Vocational, Technical, Career Institutions

WASHINGTON COUNTY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (Accredited)
Director: Peter G. Pierce
Calais, Maine 04619

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

ALVERNO COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Sister Joel Read
3401 So. 39th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
President: Harold Abel
Mount Pleasant, Michigan 48859

DePAUL UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
President: Rev. John R. Cortelyou
Contact Person: Howard A. Sulkin, Vice Pres. for Planning
Chicago, Illinois 60604

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
Acting President: Emily Hannah
Contact Person: James Deegan
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

MUNDELEIN COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Sister Susan Rink
Chicago, Illinois 60660

UNION FOR EXPERIMENTING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES/ (Candidate)
UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WALLS AND UNION GRADUATE SCHOOL
President: King Cheek
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

(Northwest Association - continued)

WHITWORTH COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Edward B. Lindaman
Contact Person: Shirley Richner or Donald DeuPree
Spokane, Washington 99251

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS, INC.

EAGLE UNIVERSITY -
(A Consortium of 10 Accredited Institutions)
Director: Steve Castleberry
Fort Campbell, Kentucky 42223

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
President: Harold Crosby
Miami, Florida 33199

MARS HILL COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Fred Bentley
Contact Person: Richard L. Hoffman, V. P. for Acad. Affairs
Mars Hill, North Carolina 28754

NOVA UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
President: Abraham S. Fischler
Contact Person: Fred A. Nelson, V. P. for External Affairs
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33314

STATE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AT MEMPHIS (Accredited)
Director: Charles O. Whitehead
Memphis, Tennessee 38134

TARRANT COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE (Accredited)
Chancellor: Joe B. Rushing
Contact Person: Jimmy Styles
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA - NEW COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: F. David Mathews
Contact Person: Mack Portera, Div. of Continuing Education
University, Alabama 35486

(Southern Association - continued)

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA (Accredited)
President: William Reese Smith
Contact Person: Kevin E. Kearney
Tampa, Florida 33620

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
Coordinator of Nontraditional Study: Nicholas Sharp
Richmond, Virginia 23284

WALDEN UNIVERSITY (Applying)
President: Bernard Turner
Contact Person: Philip C. Chamberlain, V.P. for Acad. Affairs
Naples, Florida 33940

Commission on Occupational Education Institutions

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE AIR FORCE (Accredited)
President: Col. Lyle Kaapke
Lackland AFB, Texas 78236

THE PHOTOGRAPHY SCHOOL - A DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVAL TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER-CORRY STATION (Accredited)
Commandant: Capt. D. H. Rand
Contact Person: Lt. Lester L. Harris
Pensacola, Florida 32511

U. S. QUARTERMASTER SCHOOL (Accredited)
Contact Person: Lt. Col. Robert G. Stewart,
Director of Support Services - ATSM-OS
Fort Lee, Virginia 23801

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CHAPMAN COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: G. T. Smith
Contact Person: Bert C. Williams, Dean
Orange, California 92666

(North Central Association - continued)

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO (Accredited)
President: Richard R. Bond
Contact Person: Barbara Mickey, Vice Pres. for Development
Greeley, Colorado 80639

WEBSTER COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Leigh Gerdine
St. Louis, Missouri 63119

NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CITY COLLEGE (Candidate)
President: Michael A. Pastore
Contact Person: Ronnie F. Woog, Dean of Academic Affairs
407 Lyon Building
Seattle, Washington 98104

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Daniel J. Evans
Contact Person: Edward Kormondy
Olympia, Washington 98505

MARYLHURST EDUCATION CENTER (Accredited)
Presdient: Sister Veronica Ann Baxter
Contact Person: Ludmilla Monson, Academic Vice President
Marylhurst, Oregon 97036

PROMETHEUS COLLEGE (Candidate)
Interim President: Robert S. Farrelly
7606 Douglas West
Tacoma, Washington 98499

SIERRA NEVADE COLLEGE (Accredited)
Administrative Director: Benjamin J. Solomon
Contact Person: L. E. Sherman, Academic Dean
800 Campbell Road
Incline Village, Nevada 89450

WHATCOM COMMUNITY COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: William J. Laidlaw
Contact Person: Jane Merritt, Director of Instructional Services
5217 Northwest Road
Bellingham, Washington 98225

(Western Association - continued)

CONSORTIUM OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGES (Accredited)
Director: George McCabe
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802

FIELDING INSTITUTE (Applying)
President: Frederic Hudson
226 East de la Guerra
Santa Barbara, California 92101

GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY (Accredited)
President: Otto Butz
536 Mission Street
San Francisco, California 94105

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY INSTITUTE (Applying)
President: Don Polkinghorne
San Francisco, California 94103

JOHNSTON COLLEGE - UNIVERSITY OF THE REDLANDS (Accredited)
Acting Chancellor: E. K. Williams
Redlands, California 92373

LA VERNE COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: Armen Sarafian
La Verne, California 91750

RAND GRADUATE INSTITUTE (Accredited)
Director: Charles Wolf, Jr.
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, California 80406

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ (Accredited)
Chancellor: Robert L. Sinsheimer
Contact Person: Eugene Cota-Robles, Acad. Vice Chancellor
Santa Cruz, California 95064

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC (Accredited)
President: Stanley E. McCaffrey
Contact Person: Michael Davis, Asst. to Acad. Vice Pres.
Stockton, California 95211

(Western Association - continued)

UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS - ALFRED NORTH (Accredited)
WHITEHEAD COLLEGE
President: Eugene E. Dawson
Contact Person: Cary Swaim, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Redlands, California 92373

WORLD COLLEGE WEST (Candidate)
President: Richard M. Gray
P. O. Box 3060
San Rafael, California 94902

WRIGHT INSTITUTE (Accredited)
President: Nevitt Sanford
Contact Person: Marvin Freedman, Dean,
School of Social-Clinical Psychology
2728 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, California 94704

Nontraditional programs within institutions

CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, DOMINGUEZ HILLS (Accredited)
President: Donald Gerth
Contact Person: Emory H. Holmes
Dominguez Hills, California 90747

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO (Accredited)
Chancellor: William B. McElroy
Contact Person: Martin M. Chamberlain, Dean, Univ. Extension
La Jolla, California 92093

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

BARSTOW COLLEGE (Accredited)
President: R. William Graham
2700 Barstow Road
Barstow, California 92311

NAIROBI COLLEGE (Candidate)
President: Donald R. Smothers
635 Donohoe Street
East Palo Alto, California 94303

# The Council On Postsecondary Accreditation

May 27, 1977

**PROJECT OFFICE**
Study of Nontraditional Education
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
795 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
(404) 875-8011

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
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*Middle States Association of Colleges & Secondary Schools*

William J. MacLeod
Daniel S. Maloney
*New England Association of Schools and Colleges*

Thurston E. Manning
*North Central Association of Colleges and Schools*

James F. Bemis
*Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools*

Gordon W. Sweet
Bob E. Childers
*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools*

Kay J. Andersen
Harry D. Wiser
*Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

Kenneth H. Ashworth
*Coordinating Board Texas College and University System*

Thomas J. Ginley
*Commission on Accreditation of Dental and Dental Auxiliary Education Programs, ADA*

Lloyd M. Cofer
*Michigan State University*

William A. Goddard
*National Association of Trade and Technical Schools*

**PROJECT STAFF**
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Patricia A. Thrash
*North Central Association of Colleges and Schools*

**Project Researchers**
Paul L. Dressel
*Michigan State University*

John Harris
*Tennessee Higher Education Commission*

**Staff Secretaries**
Mrs. Jean Patrick
Mrs. Jimmie Harmon

Dear

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the Regional Accrediting Commissions are cooperating in a national study funded in part by The W. K. Kellogg Foundation to develop evaluative criteria for the accreditation of nontraditional education. Enclosed for your information is a brief description of the study.

The Advisory Committee for the project has recommended that your institution be included in the study. The purpose of this letter is to acquaint you with the study and to invite you to participate in the project.

Institutions included in the project will be expected to participate in the survey phase of the project and to make available the following information:

1. Bulletins, catalogues, syllabi and other descriptive materials available on their institution or institutional programs;

2. Reports and materials prepared for state licensing and/or approval by other agencies;

3. Self-studies and other reports on the institution and programs they have prepared for accrediting agencies;

4. Evaluation Committee reports written by on-site visiting committees of accrediting commissions;

5. Names and addresses of administrative and faculty personnel utilized in the development, administration and implementation of the program;

6. A list (random sample to be drawn) of student names and addresses who have completed the institutional program;



Kenneth E. Young, President / Eugene I. Van Antwerp, Staff Associate / James M. Phillips, Staff Associate

*One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 760, Washington, D. C. 20036 phone: (202) 452-1433*

7. Copies of evaluations of the programs or institution that have been conducted in the past three years.

A few of the institutions included in the study will be visited during the project and some will be asked to participate in the field testing of the materials developed as a result of the project.

If you are willing to participate in the study, please forward the materials mentioned earlier in this letter at your earliest convenience. If you do not wish to participate in the project, please let us know so that another institution may be selected for the study.

Sincerely,

Grover J. Andrews
Project Director

Enclosure

# The Council On Postsecondary Accreditation

July 20, 1977

**PROJECT OFFICE**
Study of Nontraditional Education
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
795 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
(404) 875-8011

Dear

In checking through the materials you have submitted for the COPA Project, we have found that the items checked below have not been received. Institutions included in the project will be expected to participate in the survey phase of the project and to make available the following information if applicable. If some of the materials are not applicable or available, please let us know. If you have any questions about this, please call me or Mrs. Jimmie Harmon at the telephone listed for the Project Office.

If at all possible, we would like to have these by August 8 at which time the project staff will begin work on the analysis of the materials.

| Materials Received | | | Not Applicable | Not Available |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | No | | | |
| _____ | _____ | 1. Bulletins, catalogues, syllabi and and other descriptive materials available on the institution or institutional program; | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 2. Reports and materials prepared for state licensing and/or approval by other agencies; | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 3. Self-studies and other reports on the institution and programs they have prepared for accrediting; | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 4. Evaluation Committee reports written by on-site visiting committees of Accrediting Commissions; | _____ | _____ |

| Materials Received | | | Not Applicable | Not Available |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | No | | | |
| ____ | ____ | 5. Names and addresses of administrative and faculty personnel utilized in the development, administration and implementation of the program; | ____ | ____ |
| ____ | ____ | 6. A list (random sample to be drawn) of student names and addresses who have completed the institutional program; | ____ | ____ |
| ____ | ____ | 7. Copies of evaluations of the programs or institutions that have been conducted in the past three years. | ____ | ____ |

Please be assured that all materials will be used with the greatest confidentiality. Student names are to be used for a random sample for survey instruments and data gathered from these instruments will not in any way be associated with the individual student or institution.

Sincerely,

Grover J. Andrews
Project Director

INSTITUTE FOR
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"PECA SEMINAR ON THE COPA PROJECT"

A seminar sponsored by the Postsecondary Education Convening Authority to discuss the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation's project to develop evaluative criteria and procedures for the accreditation of nontraditional education.

The Cross Keys Inn
Columbia, Maryland
June 6-8, 1977

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

1) To provide COPA and its project staff and advisory committee an opportunity to describe the project's goals, design, and implementation plans;

2) To provide the directors of related studies in progress the opportunity to inform the COPA project staff and advisory committee about their research efforts, and to explore ways in which the COPA project can best be articulated wih these studies;

3) To provide a forum for groups and organizations with a special interest in the COPA project to share their views with the COPA project staff and advisory committee.

The following schedule is designed to help us accomplish these objectives in an informal setting, allowing plenty of time for give and take:

SEMINAR AGENDA

Monday, June 6

| | |
|---|---|
| 5:00 p.m. | Informal Reception -- Room 148. Pick up conference packets, badges, and other materials. |
| 6:15 | Dinner -- Dining Room. We have a reserved section of the dining room for our group. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 8:00 | Opening Session - Introduction and Remarks<br>Ken Fischer, PECA Director and Seminar Chairperson<br>Ellicott Room |
| | "The COPA Project: Background"<br>Ken Young, COPA President |

Tuesday, June 7

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:00 a.m. | Morning Session - Ellicott Room<br>"The COPA Project: April 77 - July 78"<br>Grover Andrews, COPA Project Director |
| 10:00 | Break |
| 10:15 | Interview with Directors of Related Research Projects |

| | |
|---|---|
| Morris Keeton | Projects of the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning |
| Lee Medsker | A project of the Berkeley Center for Research and Development in Higher Education on the evaluation of nontraditional degree programs |
| Dick Peterson | An ETS study of the state-of-the-art of lifelong learning |
| Laure Sharp | A joint project of ACE and the Bureau of Social Science Research on the acceptability and negotiability of external degrees |
| Jeannette Wheeler | A project of the American Institutes of Research on the relationship of student consumer protection strategies to external degree programs |
| Aubrey Forrest | The College Outcome Measures Project of ACT |
| Ken Fischer | Interviewer and PECA Director |

12 noon — Lunch -- Dining Room

2:00 p.m. — Afternoon Session -- Ellicott Room
Interviews with Representatives of Interest Groups

Henry Spille - American Council on Education's Office on Educational Credit

David Sweet - American Association of State Colleges and Universitities' Committee on Nontraditional Study

Bob Sexton - Coalition for Alternatives in Postsecondary Education

Shirley Spragg - Council of Graduate Schools

Lou Rabineau - Education Commission of the States

Milton Stern - The National University Extension Association's Committee on Accreditation and Continuing Education

Ron Pugsley - The U.S. Office of Education, Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation

Patsy Thrash - Interviewer and COPA Project Staff Associate

5:00 — Informal Reception -- Poolside

6:15 — Dinner -- Poolside (PECA is host for this special meal)

8:00 — Evening Session -- Ellicott Room
"Synthesis in the Public Interest"

Ronald Gross, noted educational writer and editor -- High School, Higher/Wider Education, The Lifelong Learner -- will synthesize what's happened at the seminar up to this point. He'll do so from the perspective of an informed public citizen.

Wednesday, June 8

9:00 — Morning Session -- Ellicott Room
Response from the COPA Project Team:
"What have we heard at this seminar?"

Grover Andrews - Project Director
Kay Andersen - Project Staff Associate
Patsy Thrash - Project Staff Associate
Paul Dressel - Project Research
John Harris - Project Research

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00 | Break |
| 10:15 | Feedback from conferees and continued discussion |
| 12 noon | Adjournment |

# PARTICIPANTS

## "PECA SEMINAR ON THE COPA PROJECT"

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June 6-8, 1977

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